the weekly Standard

MARCH 15, 2004

$3.95

THE POMO PRIMARY
ANDREW FERGUSON

The Perpetual Adolescent

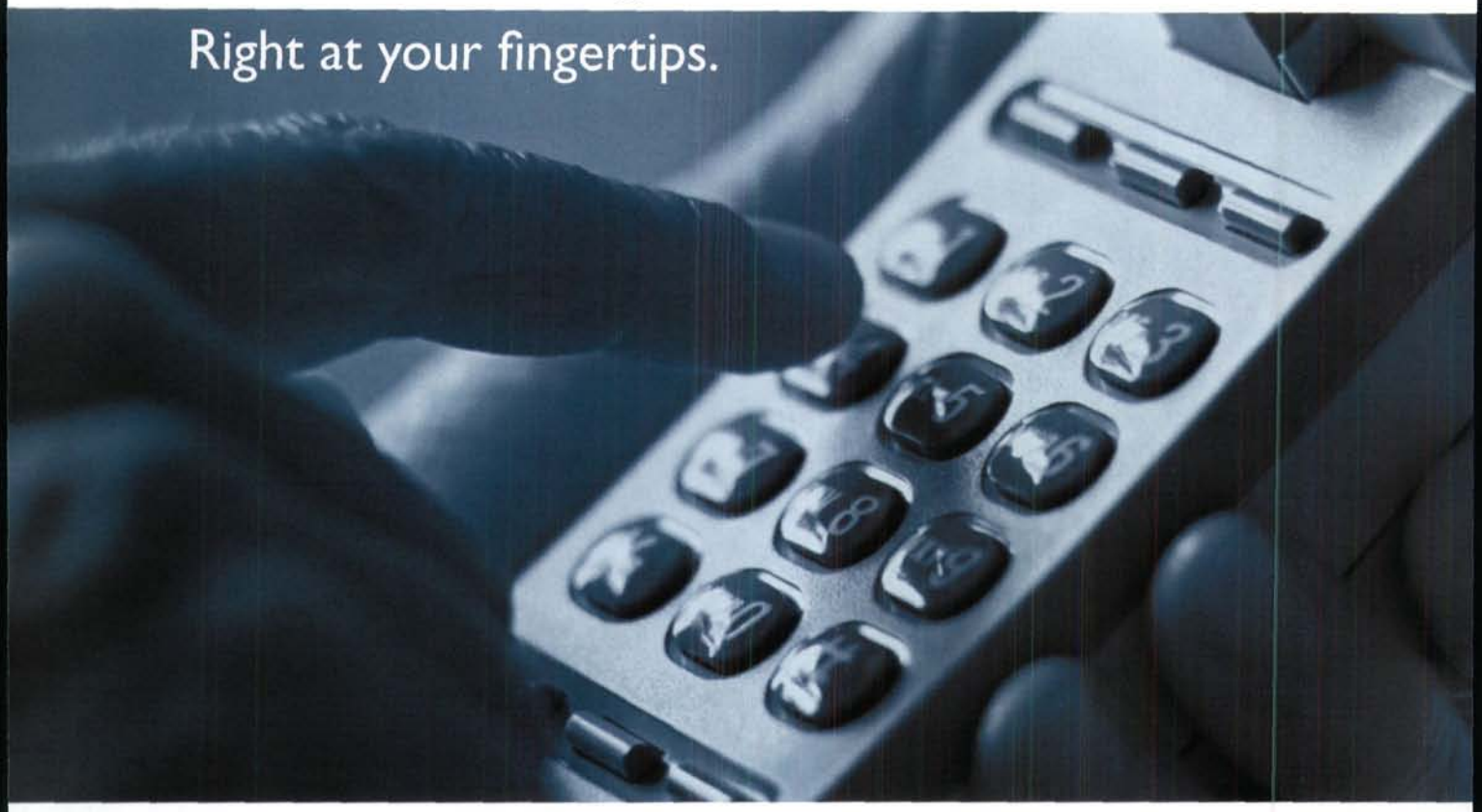
by Joseph Epstein

#BXNFMVD ******AUTO**5-DIGIT 94301
#UNZ0555B096 1#302604 WK 5571
RON UNZ DEC 06 04 000031
371 000407
555 BRYANT ST 001
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A new American right.

Right at your fingertips.



Millions of people

now have the right to choose their phone company.

Already millions of families and small businesses are exercising this new right, and millions more are joining them each year. They're enjoying lower prices, better service and phone companies that have to work to earn their business.

This new freedom would never have been possible without the hard work of Congress, the FCC and states in promoting a competitive telephone marketplace.

AT&T would like to thank the federal and state leaders who had the vision and courage to bring the American people the independence they deserve.

We're proud to be part of the competitive marketplace.

AT&T

Working for America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

March 15, 2004 • Volume 9, Number 26

2 Scrapbook ..... *On the annoying youth vote, and more.*

4 Casual ..... *Max Boot, Boorstin booster.*

6 Correspondence..... *Molly Ivins, Chechens, etc.*

9 Editorial ..... *The Dukakis Trap*

Articles

10 The Pomo Primary *Postmodern candidates talk like handlers, and voters talk like pundits*..... BY ANDREW FERGUSON

12 A Great Future Behind Him *Has John Edwards peaked?*..... BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

13 The Meltdown State *New York's pathetic economy*..... BY WILLIAM TUCKER

16 Sink the Law of the Sea Treaty *Still crazy after all these years*..... BY DOUG BANDOW

18 Homage to William Herrick *An honorable veteran of a low dishonest decade*..... BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

20 A Taxing Debate *Congress is going to be arguing about the Bush tax cuts for the rest of the year*..... BY GARY J. ANDRES

Cover: Thomas Fluharty

Features

22 The Perpetual Adolescent

And the triumph of the youth culture..... BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

27 The Battle of the Biographies

Bush v. Kerry..... BY NOEMIE EMERY

Books & Arts

31 A Just God? *Pangle, political philosophy, and the Bible*..... BY THOMAS F. POWERS

33 How He Made It *A half century of Norman Podhoretz*..... BY MURRAY FRIEDMAN

35 Urban Legends *The decline and fall of the American city*..... BY HARRY SIEGEL

38 THE STANDARD READER.... *Thomas M. Disch on Frank O'Hara, Michael Goldfarb on* The Yom Kippur War, *and more.*

40 Not A Parody..... *A final exam from the University of Georgia.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes**, *Executive Editor*
David Tell, *Opinion Editor* **Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson**, *Senior Editors* **Richard Starr, Claudia Winkler**, *Managing Editors*
Joseph Bottum, *Books & Arts Editor* **Matt Labash**, *Senior Writer* **Stephen F. Hayes**, *Staff Writer*
Victorino Matus, David Skinner, *Assistant Managing Editors* **Jonathan V. Last**, *Online Editor*
Katherine Mangu-Ward, *Reporter* **Matthew Continetti, Rachel DiCarlo, Erin Montgomery**, *Editorial Assistants*
Lev Nisnevitch, *Art Director* **Philip Chalk**, *Production Director*
Max Boot, Tucker Carlson, John J. DiIulio Jr., Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht
Brit Hume, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P. J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*
Terry Eastland, *Publisher* **Peter Dunn**, *Advertising Director*
Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising & Marketing Manager* **Kelly A. Lindner**, *Advertising Manager* **Don Eugenio**, *Midwest Advertising Manager*
Lauren Trotta Husted, *Circulation Director* **Tina Winston**, *Finance Director* **Catherine Titus Lowe**, *Publicity Director*
Taybor Cook, Carolyn Wimmer, *Executive Assistants* **Michael Goldfarb**, *Staff Assistant*

the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, the second week in July, the second week in August, and the second week in September) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Nicholas H.B. Swezey 1-202-496-3355. Midwest Advertising Sales: 1-312-953-7236. Copyright 2004, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

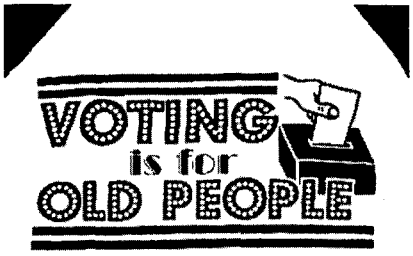
www.weeklystandard.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Complaining Is for Earnest People

It is a truism of American politics that an election cycle is not an election cycle without its fair share of hare-brained pseudo-scandals. But the latest might prompt observers to reclassify the Silly Season as the Stupid Season. At issue: the sale of a cheeky T-shirt that reads "Voting Is for Old People."

Stocked by Urban Outfitters and the creation of John Keddie, who helms *vintagevantage.com* (where the shirt is also for sale), the apathy-championing T-shirt has managed to unite chin-tuggers of all stripes. The lads at *punkvoter.com* squealed as if a nerve had been hit during a particularly painful septum-piercing. Al Jourgensen of the group Ministry wrote in a letter to Urban Outfitters, "I am shocked and appalled at your recklessness. Your T-shirt is knowingly irresponsible." And those rock'n'roll cads at Harvard's Institute of Politics were equally outraged. "The shirt's message could not be further from the truth," wrote the Institute's director, Dan Glickman. "We would be eager to work with you to suggest alternative products that send the right message to America's young people, and better



reflect the considerable social conscience and political participation of today's youth. You might consider 'Voting Rocks!'"

You might—if you're a dork. The *Washington Post* reported that the Institute went on to quote John F. Kennedy, saying, "The future promise of any nation can best be measured by the present prospects of its youth." To which we respond with the wise words of Evelyn Waugh, who pronounced, "What is youth except a man or woman before it is fit to be seen."

Color us cynical, but isn't it in the republic's best interest for those who are easily swayed by T-shirt slogans not to make their voices heard on Election Day? On *vintagevantage.com*, Keddie writes, "It appears that taking yourself too seriously is for old and young people alike. We're calling on the Camp Cool faithful to stand by our side during this difficult, uncertain time. Ha!" THE SCRAPBOOK, a Camp Cool regular, stands with Keddie, and hopes that this shameless endorsement is good enough to win us one of his overpriced T-shirts, size XL. ♦

Who Wants to Regulate a Billionaire?

At the dramatic conclusion to our previous episode (see David Tell's "Who's Afraid of George Soros?" in our March 8 issue), the Federal Election Commission had just issued an "advisory opinion" addressing the legality of a pending $300 million anti-Bush PR and voter-mobilization drive organized by a variety of nominally "independent" Democratic outfits. Bottom line: It appeared that much of what these so-called "527 groups" intend to do with large-dollar "soft-money" contributions from the likes of Soros might not, in fact, be legally doable.

Since then, at its March 4 meeting, the FEC voted 5-1 to proceed with a formal rulemaking project designed to clarify exactly what constitutes a "political committee" under the nation's new McCain-Feingold campaign laws. This, too, has direct bearing on the plans of Soros & Co. Should the commission eventually adopt something like the draft proposal (on which it's now inviting public comment), much of the rest of what those Democratic 527 groups intend to do with soft money might not be doable, either.

Of course, it's only a draft at this point, and no final ruling will be issued at least until May, and there could always be a lawsuit after that, and . . .

Ah, forget it. Readers interested in staying fully current and informed about these and other highly consequential abstrusities of the federal campaign code may wish to consult *electionlawblog.org*, the fine website put together by Loyola Law School professor Rick Hasen, whose institutional affiliation—sorry—we unaccountably fouled up in last week's issue. ♦

Caveat Emptor

Press reports indicate the Senate Intelligence Committee is close to wrapping up its review of the accuracy of the intelligence provided the administration and Congress on Iraq's weapons programs. A key finding apparently will be that the committee has uncovered no evidence that the intelligence product was slanted as a result of pressure coming from the White House or anywhere else in the administration.

So far so good. But it also appears that the committee—under pressure from committee Democrats—will be examining whether senior administration officials accurately reflected intelligence community "caveats" about Iraq's weapons programs in their public

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remarks. Putting aside the fact that such an inquiry is probably beyond the scope of the committee's oversight responsibilities, it assumes the rather dubious proposition that intelligence community analysis should be the final word on matters of national security.

However, if the committee is going to go down this road, it should, as Senators Jon Kyl and Rick Santorum wrote to Intelligence Committee chairman Pat Roberts last week, apply "that same standard" to senators who had access to the very same intelligence. And, indeed, among the more telling statements they cite as perhaps needing review is one made by the committee's own vice-chairman, Democratic senator John D. Rockefeller of West Virginia, during the floor debate over the war authorization on October 10, 2002:

> There is unmistakable evidence that Saddam Hussein is working aggressively to develop nuclear weapons and will likely have nuclear weapons within the next 5 years. He could have it earlier if he is able to obtain fissile materials on the outside market, which is possible—difficult but possible. We also should remember we have always underestimated the progress that Saddam Hussein has been able to make in the development of weapons of mass destruction.
>
> But that isn't just a future threat. Saddam's existing biological and chemical weapons capabilities pose real threats to America today, tomorrow. . . . He is working to develop delivery systems like missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles that could bring these deadly weapons against U.S. forces and U.S. facilities in the Middle East. He could make these weapons available to many terrorist groups, third parties, which have contact with his government. Those groups, in turn, could bring those weapons into the United States and unleash a devastating attack against our citizens. I fear that greatly.
>
> As the attacks of September 11 demonstrated, the immense destructiveness of modern technology means we can no longer afford to wait around for a smoking gun. . . . I do believe Iraq poses an imminent threat. I also believe after September 11, that question is increasingly outdated. It is in the nature of these weapons that he has and the way they are targeted against civilian populations that documented capability and demonstrated intent may be the only warning we get. To insist on further evidence could put some of our fellow Americans at risk. Can we afford to take that chance? I do not think we can.

Rockefeller has taken the lead in charging the administration with ignoring the "ifs, ands, and buts" in the intelligence estimates, estimates to which he was also privy. So this is a subject he obviously knows firsthand. ♦

Nice Work If You Can Get It

Unemployment "remained stuck at 5.6 percent in February as the economy added a paltry 21,000 positions," the AP reported on March 5. Forecasts had been for 125,000 jobs to be added. "Employers are still very, very cautious about adding bodies," said a disappointed Bill Cheney, chief economist at John Hancock. "If you are out there looking for a job, this is bad news," he told AP.

Just a quibble, but if you are out there looking for a job, wouldn't the bad news be that 125,000 jobs *had* been added, but that you hadn't gotten one of them? ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

Lunching with History

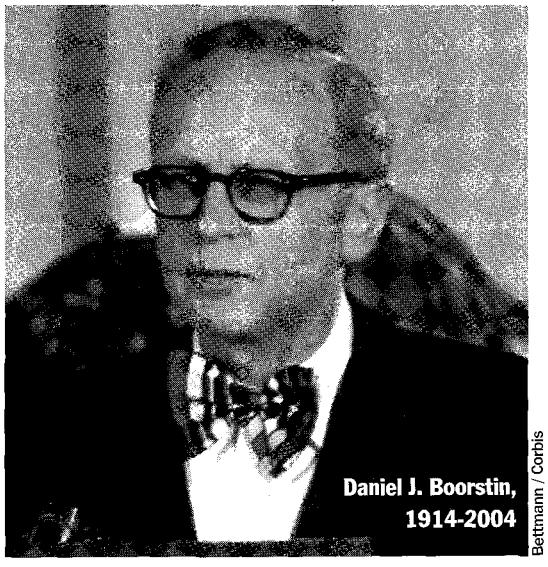
In 1995, when I was a junior editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, I was handed *The Daniel J. Boorstin Reader* to review. I had heard of the author but had never read his work. As I dove into this 900-page compendium, I quickly discovered that Boorstin had a discerning eye for detail, an ability to compose flowing sentences, and a love of quirky facts.

He put those talents to use writing compelling narratives that ranged from mummifying techniques in ancient Egypt to art in modern France. His masterpiece was *The Americans*, a trilogy that showed the importance of spelling bees, the garment industry, traveler's checks, and all sorts of other hitherto underestimated influences in the making of this country.

After my gushing review of the *Reader* appeared, I got an appreciative letter from Boorstin inviting me to lunch at the Cosmos Club. This is where—at its former location on Lafayette Square, across from the White House—Civil Service commissioner Theodore Roosevelt once held Rudyard Kipling spellbound. Our lunch was in the grand old pile where the club moved in 1952. With his natty bow tie, horn-rimmed glasses, and tweed jacket, Boorstin looked very much the Washington sage.

What I remember chiefly about the lunch is that he was a charming raconteur and a man of great learning who graciously spoke to me as if I were an equal. Though he was already a wizened ancient—or so it seemed to a twentysomething—his thoughts flowed as smoothly as a fine fountain pen and his talk was as intoxicating as a cocktail.

I went away from the meal with enhanced respect for the great man. It was with sadness, then, that I read of his death on February 28 at 89. He was treated to lengthy obituaries, which duly noted his glittering résumé: Rhodes scholar, professor at the University of Chicago, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of History and Technology, Librarian of Congress, bestselling author. But if it's possible for someone who won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and just about every other accolade a historian could reap to be underappreciated, then I would say, judging from the obituaries, that Boorstin was underappreciated.



Daniel J. Boorstin, 1914-2004

Bettmann / Corbis

Most of the articles had a slightly sniffy tone. They praised Boorstin, to be sure, but with reservations. He was, first of all, a "popular" historian—not a compliment in today's academy. He had also "named names" before the House Un-American Activities Committee following a youthful flirtation with communism. Perhaps worst of all, his books are known for celebrating America's achievements instead of wallowing in its shortcomings. As a consequence, Yale's David Greenberg wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*, "Boorstin . . . had come to be derided in some quarters as a conservative."

It's not hard to see why he might have gotten such a reputation. An old-fashioned liberal, Boorstin was disgusted by the excesses of 1960s leftists, whom he labeled, in a 1968 *Esquire* article, "The New Barbarians." He also opposed racial quotas and much of what passed for ethnic studies, which he once described as "racist trash."

Yet, while earning the enmity of the left, he hardly sought refuge on the right. He mostly stood outside politics, preferring to work by day running the Library of Congress (1975-87), while writing his thick books early in the morning. I suspect that, if pressed, he would have said he'd never abandoned his original liberal creed, with its dedication to equal treatment for all and advancement based on merit.

Boorstin's life showed how this philosophy could work at its best. It must not have been easy for him growing up as the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants in the 1920s and '30s—his family had to abandon Atlanta after encountering severe anti-Semitism—but he nevertheless conquered such gentile institutions as Harvard, Yale, and Oxford. He never, as far as I know, publicly complained of being discriminated against. Instead, he celebrated a country that made his ascent possible.

During our lunch, I remember, he mentioned that Byron White, the retired Supreme Court justice, was a close friend who often graced his Fourth of July parties with a stirring rendition of the Declaration of Independence. Today, historians are trained to dissect the Declaration for all traces of racism, sexism, and other diabolical -isms. How many of them thrill to its sonorous ring? Boorstin did.

Max Boot

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Quality

ETS was born of a commitment to learners. We believe that good teachers produce good students. ETS is committed to the goal of having every child in America taught by a well-trained, well-qualified and well-compensated teacher.

We're working toward that quality with programs that help teachers improve their skills and administrators improve their schools. We provide the licensing exams for nearly every state in the nation to make sure teachers meet state standards.

Helping teachers teach, students learn and parents measure the progress of their children is what ETS does. It is all part of a commitment of more than fifty years: A commitment to research, collaboration and innovation. A non-profit organization dedicated to a single mission…advancing learning worldwide.

We are ETS. Listening. Learning. Leading. Helping prepare each new generation for whatever the future may hold.

Listening. Learning. Leading.

www.ets.org

EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE

ETS®

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Victims' Rights

Stephen Schwartz's "Victims and Terrorists" (Feb. 23) comes at the right time. On the 60th anniversary of Stalin's brutal deportation of the Chechens, it is important to remember the complexity of Chechnya's plight and to return nuance to a discourse that has lapsed into fallacious stereotypes of Chechens as terrorists and bandits. Most Chechens long for peace, and many strive tirelessly, at great personal cost, to achieve that end.

However, a few amendments to Schwartz's article would help clarify some important issues. He writes that "Yeltsin ordered the Russian army back into Chechnya, and the nightmare resumed," whereas Vladimir Putin, succeeding Yeltsin as president, "pledged an investigation of the human rights crisis in Chechnya." Actually, it was Putin who, as prime minister in September 1999, spearheaded the suppressive campaign to restore Russian control of Chechnya, and who rode to the presidency partly on the popularity of his aggressive approach—symbolized by his promise to "rub them out in their outhouses." Putin's political reputation is thus inextricably linked to the Chechen war. There are strong incentives for Putin to achieve peace, but also to reject any compromises that suggest Russian weakness—even if they might be prerequisites to a lasting peace.

Second, the widespread criticism of Chechnya's 2003 constitutional referendum and presidential election deserves greater emphasis. A referendum to decide Chechnya's future, in which more than 80,000 Russian troops participate—not only through the threat of arms but also through the weight of their votes—hardly represents the Chechen will. This is especially the case when the referendum is on a cryptic proposed constitution barely understandable to voters. A presidential election means nothing when all competition is eliminated through technicalities and political inducements.

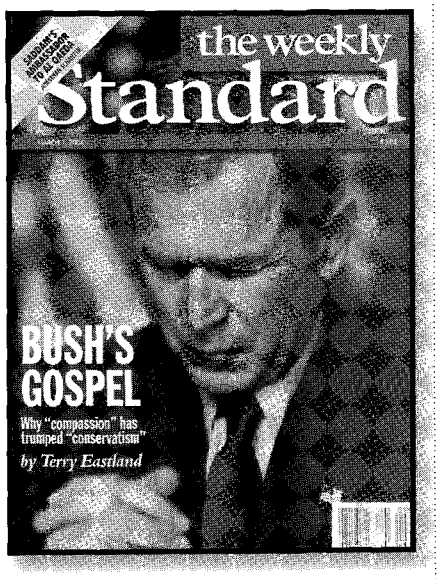
Russia, however, billed the referendum as a political solution. It was, instead, a politically expedient ploy by Putin that could very well undermine the credibility of future efforts to establish peace. Such efforts will require resumed dialogue with the Chechen moderates, who are today conflated with the very terrorists they denounce.

Nikhil I. Patel
Center for Strategic and International Studies
Washington, DC

Ivinsible

Thanks to The Scrapbook for pointing out that the line I have been using about Arnold Schwarzenegger—"looks like a condom stuffed with walnuts"—comes originally from an Australian journalist, Clive James (Jan. 12). Had I known that, I would certainly have given James credit for the line.

I heard it first in August 2003 at a civil liberties meeting in Vermont and



had no idea of its provenance. I have now put the correct credit in my column.

It is disconcerting to be accused of plagiarism when plagiarism never entered your mind.

In fact, this is the second time that this has happened to me, as The Scrapbook mentioned in its item. The experiences have made me cautious when I find my own work quoted without attribution: I do not assume the borrower is a plagiarist. Some lines just float around in the zeitgeist.

I find the best response is to send a note pointing out where the line originally appeared. This gives the other writer a chance to make the correct attribution. Thank you for providing me with that opportunity in the case of Clive James.

Molly Ivins
Austin, TX

Super Freak

Christopher Caldwell's editorial, "Put the Super Bowl on C-SPAN" (Feb. 16), pronounces, "Shame on Viacom that it disgraced the country in front of hundreds of millions of foreigners watching the Super Bowl for the first time (including in China). But shame on us if we permit them to do it again." To which I say, fair enough.

But shame on Viacom then, too, for allowing the flag of the United States to be abused (dare I say, desecrated) in front of millions of Americans. You see, prior to Janet Jackson's infamous "wardrobe malfunction," the rock star Kid Rock draped himself ingloriously in the American flag as part of his halftime show act.

But Kid Rock's childish actions were in plain violation to the U.S. Flag Code, which instructs that "the flag should never be used as wearing apparel. . . ."

Who will enforce this statute in light of Kid Rock's embarrassing display?

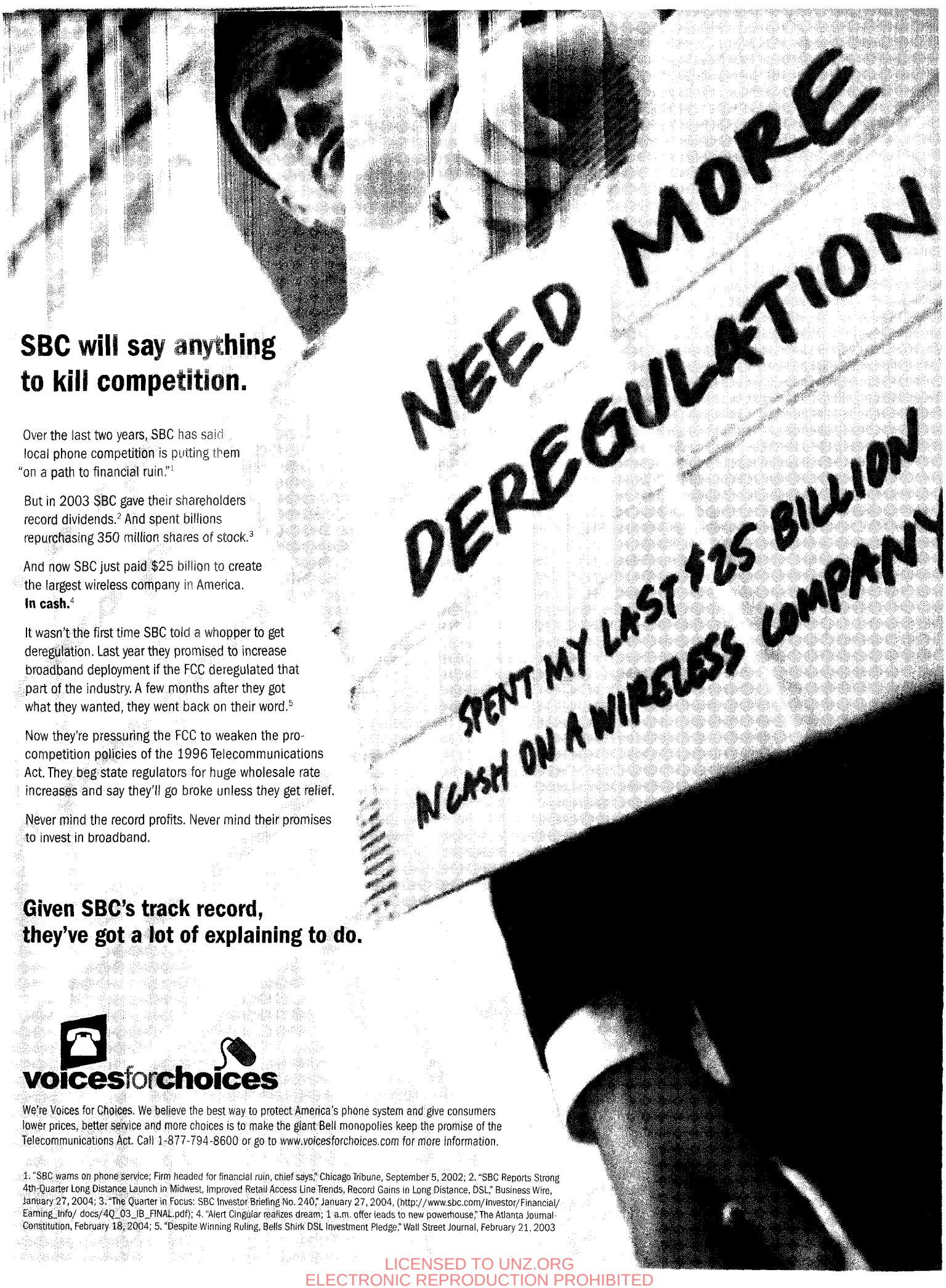
C.T. Grumbine
Nottingham, MD

• • •

The Weekly Standard
welcomes letters to the editor.
Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number.
All letters should be addressed:
Correspondence Editor
The Weekly Standard
1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036.

You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901
or email: editor@weeklystandard.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



SBC will say anything to kill competition.

Over the last two years, SBC has said local phone competition is putting them "on a path to financial ruin."[1]

But in 2003 SBC gave their shareholders record dividends.[2] And spent billions repurchasing 350 million shares of stock.[3]

And now SBC just paid $25 billion to create the largest wireless company in America. **In cash.**[4]

It wasn't the first time SBC told a whopper to get deregulation. Last year they promised to increase broadband deployment if the FCC deregulated that part of the industry. A few months after they got what they wanted, they went back on their word.[5]

Now they're pressuring the FCC to weaken the pro-competition policies of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. They beg state regulators for huge wholesale rate increases and say they'll go broke unless they get relief.

Never mind the record profits. Never mind their promises to invest in broadband.

Given SBC's track record, they've got a lot of explaining to do.

voicesforchoices

We're Voices for Choices. We believe the best way to protect America's phone system and give consumers lower prices, better service and more choices is to make the giant Bell monopolies keep the promise of the Telecommunications Act. Call 1-877-794-8600 or go to www.voicesforchoices.com for more information.

1. "SBC warns on phone service; Firm headed for financial ruin, chief says," Chicago Tribune, September 5, 2002; 2. "SBC Reports Strong 4th-Quarter Long Distance Launch in Midwest, Improved Retail Access Line Trends, Record Gains in Long Distance, DSL," Business Wire, January 27, 2004; 3. "The Quarter in Focus: SBC Investor Briefing No. 240," January 27, 2004, (http://www.sbc.com/Investor/Financial/Earning_Info/ docs/4Q_03_IB_FINAL.pdf); 4. "Alert Cingular realizes dream; 1 a.m. offer leads to new powerhouse," The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 18, 2004; 5. "Despite Winning Ruling, Bells Shirk DSL Investment Pledge," Wall Street Journal, February 21, 2003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Freedom and prosperity... for all.

The American-Kuwaiti Alliance Congratulates Kuwait on the 43rd Anniversary of Kuwait National Day, February 25, 2004, and the 13th Anniversary of Kuwait Liberation Day, February 26, 2004.

Kuwait National Day

Kuwait National Day marks the day, 43 years ago, when Kuwait obtained its independence as a nation during the reign of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Kuwait Liberation Day

Kuwait Liberation day marks the day, 13 years ago, when U.S. and allied troops liberated the people of Kuwait and restored Kuwait's sovereignty. The day is a celebration of the long friendship that exists between the people of Kuwait and the people of the United States.

The American-Kuwaiti Alliance

Dedicated to expanding and deepening the political, commercial and cultural ties between the U.S. and Kuwait, the American-Kuwaiti Alliance is made up of leading U.S. and Kuwaiti businesses and is guided by a board of directors comprised of leading figures from government, industry, and academia. The Alliance facilitates the development of programs that will strengthen political connections, promote trade and commerce, and create opportunities for American and Kuwaiti citizens to exchange cultural experiences. To learn more about or to join the Alliance, visit us at www.american-kuwaitialliance.com or call 202-429-4999.

FEBRUARY 25, 2004

43 years ago Kuwait obtained its independence as a nation during the reign of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah

FEBRUARY 26, 2004

13 years ago U.S. and allied troops liberated the people of Kuwait and restored Kuwait's sovereignty.

American Kuwaiti ALLIANCE

american-kuwaitialliance.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

The Dukakis Trap

A senior White House official spoke privately the other day about dramatic progress in the Middle East. Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds have broken an impasse and are on the verge of a historic compromise on a new Iraqi constitution. It mandates a pluralistic, democratic Iraq when the United States hands over sovereignty on June 30. Meanwhile, as a consequence of American intervention in Iraq, reformers have been strengthened in other countries throughout the region. In Pakistan and elsewhere, official support for Islamic radicalism—and official tolerance for terrorism—are on the wane. Israel is going to withdraw from settlements for the first time in a generation—and the threat of terror there, too, seems reduced. There are even signs that the Europeans may actually help in efforts to reform the Middle East.

The White House official also had a lament. How come these breakthroughs have gotten so little serious attention? A good question—and one that spotlights a real problem for President Bush's reelection prospects.

No, we are not speaking here of the classic problem that would bedevil George W. Bush in even the best of circumstances: Republican presidents are almost always "embattled" and almost always have trouble "getting out the good news" through a not-so-vaguely hostile press corps. The problem is deeper than that.

The truth is, the White House isn't trying very hard.

Who has been assigned to publicly make the president's case for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage? we asked a White House official. The response was, well, er, no one in particular. And thus, one rarely hears the case made in a serious authoritative way, on an issue important to the president's prospects, but one which he is not personally going to address every day.

Assertiveness is lacking in the campaign, too. A former administration official said to a campaign aide that Bush had a great story to tell about tax cuts and the economic recovery. "Yeah, you're right," the aide replied. "But we can't be too Pollyannish. We don't want to seem out of touch."

Lack of concerted effort is the least alarming part of Bush's problem. What's worse is the White House and the Bush campaign seem to have been spooked. They seem fearful and tentative and weak at exactly the moment when they need to be confident and aggressive. Democrats and their allies are united behind Bush's opponent, John Kerry, and have no qualms about attacking the president on any subject whatsoever. At best, Bush's aides respond defensively. At worst, their clumsiness turns a minor flap into a prolonged controversy.

Last week's Democratic-generated pseudo-firestorm (perpetrated with extraordinary media collusion) over Bush campaign ads with fleeting pictures of Ground Zero offered a prime example of White House timidity. The charge that the ads demeaned the 9/11 dead was totally trumped-up and cynical. The response by press secretary Scott McClellan and former Bush adviser Karen Hughes was adequate—as far as it went. "I was at the White House and I saw how it affected our national public policy and it's just almost inconceivable to me that the next president can't talk about that day," Hughes said. Additionally, the Bush campaign produced ex-New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, former police chief Bernard Kerik, and a 9/11 widow to support the ads.

Fine, but only for starters. Entirely missed was an opportunity to turn the tables on Kerry and his cohorts, who don't want 9/11 or terrorism to be salient issues in the campaign. The issue, McClellan or Hughes or someone should have said, is not a TV ad but how seriously we take the terrorist threat. Bush has declared war on terrorism. Kerry doesn't want to be a war president. He says the threat has been exaggerated and that law enforcement and intelligence should be the chief weapons against terrorists. This was the policy that allowed the attacks on 9/11 to happen. Bush thinks a more realistic and tougher approach is needed, including a strengthened Patriot Act, which Kerry opposes. Sadly, we heard little of this from Bush's defenders. Nor did they express outrage at the grotesque exploitation of 9/11 widows being trotted out with identical talking points attacking Bush's alleged "exploitation" of 9/11.

Who could have imagined the situation Bush finds himself in? The Democrats are trying to take the finest hour of Bush's presidency—his magnificent response to 9/11—off the table. Republicans often liken Kerry to Michael Dukakis, the wimpy Democratic presidential nominee in 1988. But perhaps it's Bush who should worry about falling into the Dukakis trap. Bush and his team seem to assume opposition charges won't hurt because, *of course*, voters will know the charges are unfair and disingenuous. It's Kerry and his adviser Bob Shrum, with their relentless attacks, who are following the example of Bush's father and Lee Atwater. We know who prevailed then.

—Fred Barnes and William Kristol

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Pomo Primary

Postmodern candidates talk like handlers, and voters talk like pundits. BY ANDREW FERGUSON

WE DIDN'T ARRIVE here overnight, all at once—here at the tail end of this hallucinatory primary season, when politics slipped down the rabbit hole of postmodernism and became an activity that is only about itself. Scanning back through the last few years and my own meager experience, I can find three landmarks that, had I been paying attention, might have offered a hint of what we, the people, were getting ourselves into.

The first landmark, everyone has heard of. On January 15, 1992, during a gruesome New Hampshire "town meeting" at the dawn of his reelection campaign, the first President Bush struggled heroically, and in the end famously, to get a point across to an indifferent audience in Exeter. His political consultants in Washington had prepared him for a bad reception: Focus groups were united in seeing their president, in those recessionary days, as out of touch and uncaring. The political purpose of his trip to New Hampshire was to dispel the notion.

President Bush opened the town meeting like so: "One of the things that I'm pleased to be able to do here is to at least let the people of this state know that even though I am president and do have two or three other responsibilities, that when people are hurting, we care."

A moment later: "Of course, we care."

A moment more: "And of course, we care."

It wasn't working. The questions became increasingly hostile.

And so: "I'll take my share of the blame. I don't take it for not caring."

And again: "I do care about it. I just wanted to say that."

"Two things. One, I know you're hurting; two, I care about it."

Still nothing, until, in his frustration with yet another unfriendly question, he let go finally, desperately, deathlessly. "But," he said, "the message: I care."

The veil slipped, the curtain was pulled back, the politician stood exposed. It was as though a magician had invited us backstage to watch as he stuffed the pigeons up his sleeve. Political commentators (not nearly so numerous in that innocent era) noted the oddity. A politician describing his own "message"—the jig was up! It was thought to be inept at best, cynical at worst, artless in any case. "He blurted out his handlers' notes verbatim," said *Newsweek*, astonished. By the end of the month the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* had printed the phrase more than a dozen times, and since then, in the annals of silly remarks, President Bush's self-referential declamation of his "message" has achieved second place only to Sally Fields's peerless outburst, "You like me, you really like me!"

The second landmark was less conspicuous. It came four years later, in August 1996, when the Republicans gathered in San Diego to nominate Bob Dole as their presidential candidate.

One morning I stood in the lobby of the hotel where most of the delegates were lodged. David Broder (then as now, and forever, dean of the Washington press corps) was there, fresh from a morning TV appearance. I'd seen the show. The dean had announced that the selection of Jack Kemp as Dole's vice presidential nominee would "energize the base," using a word, "base," deployed in those days almost exclusively by political professionals.

Pen in hand, the dean was interviewing delegates as they milled about. A couple of them seemed inordinately excited, as often happens when Broder enters a room. They mentioned that they had just seen him on television less than two hours before. The dean nodded. He asked them what they thought of the Kemp nomination.

"Well, I'll tell you one thing," one of the delegates said, with firm authority. "It will energize the base of this party."

Broder nodded again, thoughtfully, and made a note in his pad.

Another few years passed, and my third landmark came as I watched a roundtable discussion on CNN's Sunday morning talk show, *Late Edition*. The 2000 election campaign was approaching, but, as often happens, nothing newsworthy had occurred. The commentators on the panel were bereft: so many insights to share, so little news on which to lavish them. But their moderator saved the day. He mentioned an on-air discussion the panel had undertaken a few weeks before. The pundits smiled fondly at the memory. And then, unexpectedly, the moderator said, "Roll tape," and the pundits watched their comments from the earlier show. The tape stopped. The pundits looked at one another. Something to talk about! So they commented on their comments.

There was a purity to the moment. As I watched it transpire, all commentary, all punditry, indeed all politics, seemed to fold in on itself and become perfectly, pristinely self-contained, utterly separated from, completely unsullied by, the outside world—the world, that is, in which normal, nonpolitical people live. This was commentary distilled to its essence; commentary on commentary, commentary for its own sake. And so it has continued up to now, it seems to me, more than four years later, as we few Americans who remain interested in politics have

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

watched this odd primary campaign unfold into a kind of postmodern performance piece.

Return to President Bush's famous declaration of his message in 1992. In retrospect it looks quaint; at the time it seemed genuinely transgressive, a real boner. Back then the word "message" still had the vaguely disreputable odor of the flack clinging to it. A politician wasn't supposed to self-consciously declare his "message," he was supposed to demonstrate it: make it come alive through indirection, by means of anecdotes or images or ideas, and persuade his audience of its plausibility. Then, suddenly, in 1992, here was the candidate just asserting it: *You wanna message? Terrific. Here it is. Suck on it.* In the normal transaction between speaker and hearer, persuader and persuaded, pol and voter, some crucial piece of connective tissue was being weirdly elided, in the best postmodern fashion.

Yet now, in the pomo primaries, the elision doesn't seem weird at all. In fact it's become customary for a presidential candidate to "get his message across" by simply announcing that he's getting his message across. Attending a rally for John Kerry, or watching one of his TV ads, or drifting through his website, a voter will hear the candidate say: "My message isn't for just part of America, it's for all of America—a message about how we're going to put Americans back to work." The voter will wait in vain for particulars, such as how this message is to be realized and Americans put back to work. (I do know it has something to do with raising taxes on rich people.) Nevertheless, when asked, the voter will tell an inquiring reporter that he "really likes Kerry's message about jobs." At a rally for John Edwards a few weeks ago, in South Carolina, I heard the comely Carolinian announce: "Let me tell you something. My message of hope and optimism is resonating all across America." And the crowd applauded! He might as well have hollered "applause line!" to receive the same reaction. "My message works," Edwards told an interviewer not long ago. "And it's going to continue to work." In South Carolina he said: "My message is optimism. My message is about hope." Marshall McLuhan was wrong. The medium isn't the message. The message is the message.

The key to postmodernism is reflexivity, when words no longer seem to refer to anything outside themselves. Reflexivity set the tone for this primary season. In his stump speech, as well as in interviews, Richard Gephardt said he was "energizing the base," by which he hoped to energize the base. Howard Dean said he would be nominated because he "was bringing new people into the process"—a remark that was designed to bring new people into the process who would then guarantee his nomination. It is an odd experience, watching politicians campaign using the same language their campaign managers use giving a backgrounder to political reporters. But the popularity of this new mode of discourse led several reporters and commentators to say that voters had become "more sophisticated." What it really showed, though, was that voters were starting to think like political reporters, which is not at all the same thing.

The new self-consciousness did serve the salutary (and long overdue) goal of breaking down the division between journalist and voter; people who pay attention to pundits suddenly realized that anybody can be a pundit. Maureen Dowd is a pundit. Twenty years ago the futurist Alvin Toffler, a herald of postmodernism, predicted that pretty soon producers would become indistinguishable from consumers: Everybody, Toffler said, would be a "prosumer." And sure enough, in the hermetic world of politics, everybody—voter, pundit, reporter, consultant, politician, news junkie—has become a prosumer, consumer and producer all in one. I should have seen it coming in that lobby in San Diego eight years ago, in the feedback loop of received wisdom that existed between Dean Broder and his viewers, who were also his sources.

It was even more obvious when the pundits of *Late Edition* took themselves as the subject of their own commentary. Of course, this year the echo chamber was enlarged to include bloggers, whose primary purpose seems to be self-reference, opinions about opinions, with Instapundit linking to a nugget from *gasbag.com*, who's riffing off a comment posted 40 minutes ago by the Bloviator in response to an insight posted 45 minutes ago on *TwoWackos.net*, which had been quoting Instapundit's thoughts on Bloviator's earlier post. The inbreeding has become so commonplace that even bloggers have stopped commenting on each other's comments about it.

In the pomo primary everybody was thinking like a pundit, especially voters. How else to account for the instant cliché of the season, "electability"? Since the first seeds of self-government sprouted in the Agora, this is surely the strangest rationale yet devised for choosing one candidate over another. Voters voted for someone because they thought voters would vote for him. It is second-order reasoning, a meta-rationale, a judgment about a judgment about a judgment. It will make your head hurt if you think about it too long.

Fortunately we won't have to think about it much longer. (I have spoken.) The reflexivity that made this primary season so weird is what happens when a pastime, like politics, loses its general audience and shrinks, cult-like, to a minority obsession: a bit more popular than clog-dancing, much less popular than motocross. But by fall the weirdness will drop away, as politics leaves its self-referential cocoon and emerges into the harsh light of that other, larger world, where nonpolitical people live. I don't know what the harsh light will reveal, but I can guess. Is it possible that electability will no longer be a good reason to elect a candidate whose message is his message? ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Great Future Behind Him

Has John Edwards peaked?

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

BOWING OUT OF THE RACE for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination last week, John Edwards addressed a crowd of cheering supporters outside a high school in Raleigh, North Carolina. What he chose to talk about mainly was his warm admiration for the party's freshly minted de facto nominee, John Kerry—whom Edwards had attacked repeatedly in a television debate only three days before.

A lot can change in 72 hours. "I want to say a word about a man who is a friend of mine," Edwards told the crowd. Kerry, he explained, is a man who has "strength and great courage." Kerry is a "fighter." He has fought for the things "all of us" Democrats "believe in," like "more jobs" and "cleaner water." He "has what it takes" to be president. And he is, Edwards said again, "my friend."

Edwards was offering the classic olive branch to the winner who'd defeated him. And he may have been signaling a desire to be Kerry's running mate. But his remarks were also something more. They were an acknowledgment from Edwards, however tacit, that his political future is now tied to Kerry's. As several Democratic strategists explained last week, if Edwards is not Kerry's running mate, or if Kerry loses the election and thus forfeits any chance of nominating Edwards to a position in his administration, chances are that the North Carolina senator has run his last campaign.

Which may come as a surprise to some, given the pro-Edwards punditry of recent weeks. After Edwards placed a distant third in the New Hampshire primary on January 27, many labeled the senator a favored presidential prospect for 2008.

For example, on Super Tuesday (March 2)—a day when Edwards failed to win a single primary—Tim Russert of NBC News called him well "positioned to seek the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008 if in fact John Kerry is not successful in the fall." Susan Molinari, the former Republican congresswoman turned CNBC political analyst, has said Edwards is "a viable candidate against Mrs. Clinton perhaps in 2008." MSNBC's Joe Scarborough agrees. As does Republican commentator Leslie Sanchez. As does conservative activist Bay Buchanan. As does CNN political analyst Carlos Watson.

John Edwards

Earl Kelany

But Edwards would face significant obstacles should he decide to run for president in 2008. For one thing, he will be out of a job in 10 months, having chosen to forgo a Senate reelection bid this fall in order to focus on his presidential campaign. He won't be able to run for governor of North Carolina until at least 2008, at which point, according to Russert, he will be a presidential candidate again. He has no political constituency outside the Senate, no movement or cause that he represents—as Ronald Reagan did in the 1970s, Pat Buchanan did in the 1990s, and Howard Dean does now. He also has few laurels to fall back on. As Democratic consultant Peter Fenn put it, "Edwards's résumé is pretty thin."

Especially when it comes to electoral politics. Remember that Edwards has won only two elections—ever. In 1998, he was elected to the Senate with 51 percent of the vote. And he won this year's South Carolina primary, with a plurality of 45 percent. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Edwards's average vote share in this year's Democratic primaries was just 19 percent. "In modern presidential history, no one in either party has ever gone so long on so little," says Larry Sabato, who heads the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

Democrats say that Edwards's appeal as a presidential candidate, and as a potential running mate for Kerry, lies in his southern background. But it is hard to argue that Edwards would draw much support from the South in 2008, considering how little he drew in 2004. Polls showed Edwards losing a race against President Bush even in his home state of North Carolina. And in primaries in Virginia, Georgia, and Tennessee, Edwards lost to a consummate northerner, John Kerry.

Edwards does have political strengths, to be sure, all of which could help him in a 2008 presidential bid. Over the last year, he's become a national political figure. He's built a political organization and formed alliances with potential donors, especially his fellow trial lawyers. And he's received the most favorable media coverage of any presidential candidate this cycle: A Center for Media and

Matthew Continetti is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Public Affairs study showed that a whopping *92 percent* of Edwards's press was favorable. (Kerry came in a distant second, with only 65 percent favorable coverage.)

Democratic strategists say Edwards's youth—he's 50—is another advantage. They say he has, pound for pound, the most developed policies of any Democratic presidential candidate. And there is no denying his charisma. "He is the best stump speaker, at least in this cycle, for the Democrats," says Tom Schaller, a political scientist at the University of Maryland.

But can these gifts carry Edwards through four years in the political wilderness? The historical record provides reason to be skeptical. In recent memory, there have been two presidential primary campaigns that left a losing candidate well set up for the next electoral cycle. In 1976, Ronald Reagan won primary after primary, even selecting a running mate weeks before the brokered convention that nominated President Gerald Ford; the day the convention opened, Reagan had 1,063 delegates, Ford 1,102. And in 1984, Gary Hart defeated Walter Mondale in so many states that he came to be seen as a credible Democratic nominee; going into the convention, Hart and Mondale each had over 1,000 delegates. But that wasn't the case this year. According to CNN, on March 3, the day he dropped out of the race, Edwards had won 513 delegates. Kerry had 1,557.

"Hart and Reagan laid a credible claim to the nomination by doing so well and coming so close," says Larry Sabato. "This is not close at all."

The picture grows darker still for Edwards. Suppose he becomes Kerry's running mate, but the Democratic ticket loses in November. Edwards still won't be a lock for 2008. Joe Lieberman was the vice presidential nominee in 2000, but that didn't help his campaign four years later, notes Tom Schaller. "Edwards would have to figure out a way to stay relevant, and if there's no Kerry administration, he's going to have a hard time sticking around." ♦

The Meltdown State

New York's pathetic economy.

BY WILLIAM TUCKER

New York

THE DEMOCRATIC CIRCUS came to New York for Super Tuesday. John Edwards preached about the "two Americas." John Kerry's fans in Buffalo put up a huge sign: "America Works Best When We Say Union Yes. Edwards was closer to the mark: If there is one state going in a different direction than the rest of America, it is New York. But New York's meltdown is the result of exactly the kind of policies Democrats are promising for everyone else.

As usual, New York is dragging itself out of the recession far behind the rest of the country. During the 1990-91 downturn, New York state lost one of every five jobs that disappeared nationwide. While the rest of the country was growing by the beginning of 1992, New York didn't see job growth until 1994.

This time is no different. While the national economy grew at a blistering 7.2 percent in the third quarter of 2003, New York grew 0.3 percent—and politicians were celebrating! Wall Street has revived, but at current rates it will be 2006 before New York City recovers its job loss from the last three years. That's not surprising. Like the Jets and Giants, Wall Street basically uses New York as a business address. Since 1990, 95 percent of the job growth in financial services has been outside New York City.

Still, that's not the real New York story. The unprecedented devastation is found outside the five boroughs—on Long Island and in the "Northern Tier" of industrial cities that once formed the backbone of the state's manufacturing economy. As Fredric U. Dicker, state editor of the *New York Post*, recently put it, "Albany politicians are fiddling while New York burns." Here's the scorecard:

* Buffalo is so financially weak that Mayor Anthony Masiello has thrown in the towel and asked that the city be absorbed into surrounding Erie County. County officials are wary, however, fearing that consolidation may bankrupt the county.

* Rochester's largest industry, Kodak, has just announced it will cut another 5,000 jobs. Kodak's Rochester employment, which stood at 60,000 in 1981, will now be 15,000. Xerox, the city's other major manufacturer, has cut employment from 16,000 to 8,000 since the late 1970s.

* Syracuse's largest employer, Carrier Corp., announced in October it will close its two manufacturing plants in 2004, moving 1,200 jobs to Georgia and the Far East. Pyramid Companies' efforts to expand a shopping mall in the city also fell apart in the last year.

* Schenectady, once the world headquarters of General Electric, is at the point of financial collapse. The city has borrowed $12 million in short-term notes and illegally transferred $5 million from capital funds to meet operating expenses. State comptroller Alan Hevesi says the city will run out of cash in May.

* Westchester County just lost its AAA bond rating despite an 18 percent increase in property taxes. Nas-

William Tucker is a New York writer and fellow with the Discovery Institute.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sau and Suffolk counties are in similar predicaments. A recent survey found that Long Island's population of 18-to-34-year-olds dropped 20 percent over the last decade, with 5 percent of the 24-to-35 group leaving in 2001 alone.

* Albany is the one bright spot, with the NanoTech Center at SUNY Albany having just persuaded IBM to build the world's most advanced microchip factory in nearby Fishkill. Sematech, the international semiconductor consortium, has also located its second facility in Albany. (Austin has the first.) These faint signs of life are probably because Albany is the home of one of America's biggest spending machines, the New York state legislature.

Geography and climate obviously play a part in this historical decline. The Northern Tier, originally built along the Erie Canal, has become the Snow Belt, with 20-degree temperatures and four-foot drifts through much of the winter. With opportunity flourishing in the Sunbelt, many people simply won't live under these conditions anymore. Yet other cold climates—Minnesota, Wisconsin, Chicago, Toronto—have experienced slow growth while avoiding utter financial ruin.

New York's disaster can be summed up in one word—Medicaid. While Medicaid is the principal social-services burden in every other state, in New York it is swallowing the entire economy.

The fateful decision was made in 1966, when Congress promised to split the costs of the health care program with the states (50-50 in "wealthy" states like New York, 80-20 in poor states like Mississippi). While most states approached Medicaid gingerly as a potential burden, New York politicians gleefully embraced it as an opportunity to "leverage" federal dollars. Local counties (including New York City's five counties) were mandated to match the state government's spending—even though decision-making largely remained in Albany.

As a result, New York will spend $42 billion on Medicaid this year, more than California ($25 billion) and Texas ($15 billion) combined, even though together those states have three times New York's population. New York City alone will spend $4.5 billion on Medicaid—more than the entire municipal budget of every city in the country except Los Angeles and Chicago. Even then, politicians are wildly expanding the program. After September 11, Governor George Pataki created Family Health Plus to extend Medicaid to working families. Not to be outdone, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has been running his own recruitment effort—the logic being that more enrollees will help pay the bills in New York City's $1 billion municipal hospital system. In two short years, New York City's Medicaid rolls have leaped 50 percent, from 1.6 million to 2.4 million—one out of every three residents. The city only receives 3.4 million tax filings. Within a decade, the number of Medicaid beneficiaries could easily exceed the number of taxpayers.

Outside New York City the situation is even worse. "Every penny of the Erie County property tax goes to Medicaid," says county executive Joel Giambra. In Broome County, only a 37 percent tax increase over the last two years prevented Medicaid bills from going above 100 percent of real property tax receipts. Yet the state continues to force new mandates on local governments. "When the state can bring in new constituents at 25 cents on the dollar, there's no incentive to curtail the program," complains Bob Gregory, executive director of the New York State Association of Counties.

If you read us weekly, don't miss us daily.

www.weeklystandard.com

Where you can read both THE WEEKLY STANDARD and the Daily Standard

the weekly Standard

Subscribe • The Weekly Standard • The Daily Standard • Info • Search • Subscribers Only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Much of the problem grows out of Albany's petrified political culture. Although state legislators are the longest-tenured lawmakers in the country, they play almost no role in budget-making. By long-standing tradition, the entire negotiation is carried out between: (1) the governor, (2) the speaker of the assembly (Democrat Sheldon Silver), and (3) the majority leader of the senate (upstate Republican Joe Bruno). Once the leaders have struck a bargain, party members fall in line. In these close quarters, the state's powerful municipal and service-workers' unions wield enormous strength.

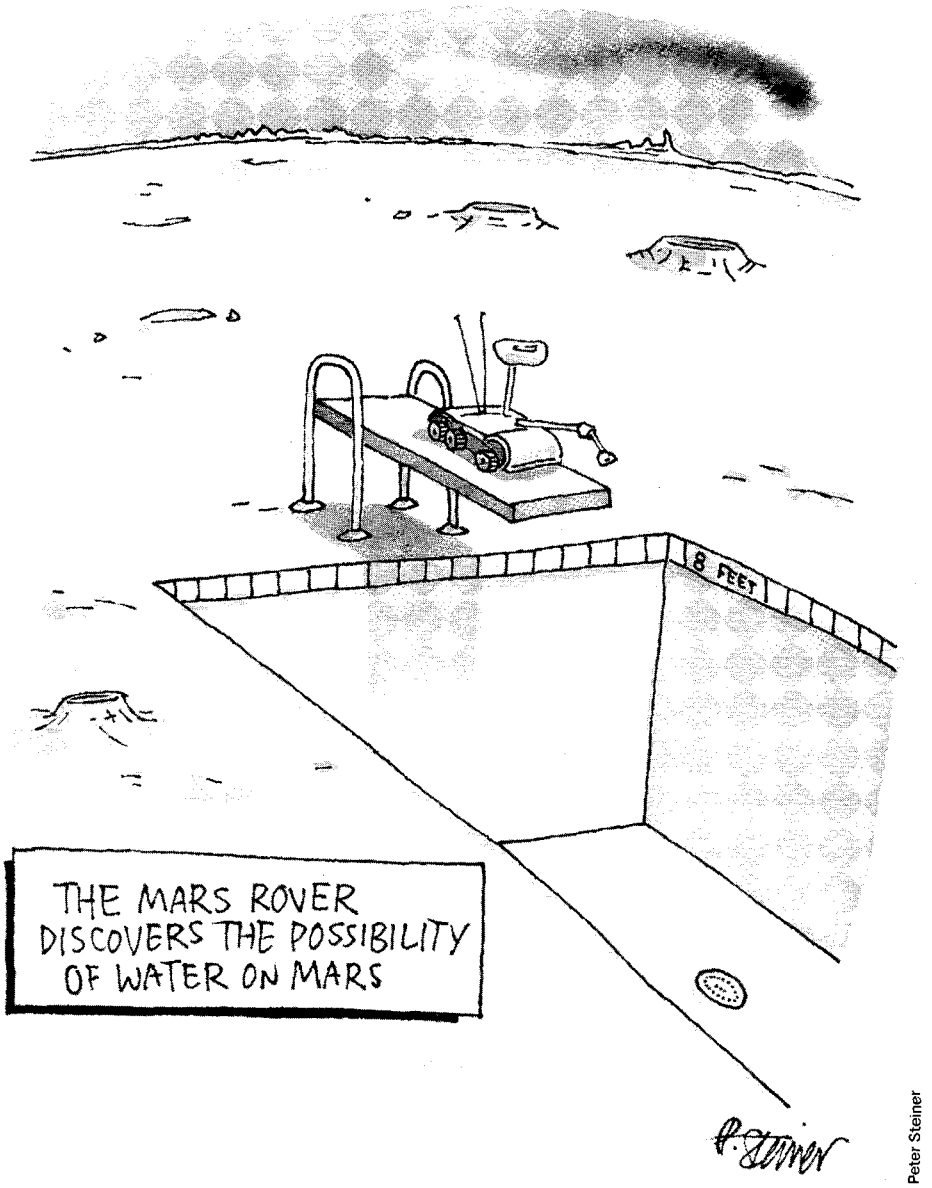
The system is finally being challenged. Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi, a liberal Democrat, is leading an effort to unseat legislators no matter what their party affiliation. "It cannot be that all municipal officials, regardless of party or geography, are high-taxing, reckless spenders who have no regard for taxpayers on fixed incomes and are intent on preventing new businesses from locating in our communities," says Suozzi. "There must be something we share in common. It is New York state government."

Still, there is little chance of Suozzi's effort generating much heat. Ballot initiatives—the premier instrument of tax revolts in other states—are not permitted in New York. The state constitution does require voter approval of bond issues, but Governor Nelson Rockefeller learned to circumvent this long ago through quasi-private authorities. New York state now has more long-term debt ($40 billion) than any other state, and New York City has more debt than New York state.

Still, the forces of dissolution are not resting. Only two weeks ago, Local 1199 of the Services Employees International Union (hospital workers)—in conjunction with the immensely powerful Greater New York Hospitals Association—proposed Heal New York, essentially a blood transfusion to the hospitals from the small-business sector. Eager to have their bills paid, Local 1199 and the Hospitals Association want the state to require every business with more than 25 employees to provide health insurance—or pay a $3,000-per-head tax to cover yet another expansion of Medicaid.

If the mandate passes, New York—already at the bottom in most job-generation indexes—will probably fall off the edge of the continent. At best it will develop an underground economy more reminiscent of Italy than America. Yet Local 1199 president Dennis Rivera, the most powerful political actor in the state, is likely to get his way. Social services employment already exceeds Wall Street employment, and almost half the metropolitan area's 25 largest employers are hospitals. When Big Health talks, Albany listens.

To quote John Kerry's supporters, when you say union yes, you get an economy that looks like New York's. So yes, John Edwards, lets have one America. But not one that looks like this state. ♦



Peter Steiner

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sink the Law of the Sea Treaty

Still crazy after all these years.

BY DOUG BANDOW

PRESIDENT BUSH has demonstrated his willingness to stand alone internationally. Yet for little better reason than go-along, get-along multilateralism, the administration is now pushing the Senate to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty, which was just unanimously voted out of Richard Lugar's Senate Foreign Relations Committee. At a committee meeting in February, Lugar noted a wide range of support from American interests "for U.S. accession to be completed swiftly." However, the treaty is a flawed document, and there would be serious costs from accepting it.

The Law of the Sea Treaty originated in the 1970s as part of the United Nations' redistributionist agenda known as the "New International Economic Order." The convention covers such issues as fishing and navigation, but the controversy arose mainly over seabed mining. In essence, the Law of the Sea Treaty was designed to transfer wealth and technology from the industrialized states to the Third World.

Two decades ago, President Ronald Reagan ignored criticism of American unilateralism and refused to sign the treaty. U.S. leadership caused the Europeans and even the Soviet Union to stay out. Many Third World states eventually acknowledged the treaty's many flaws.

But treaties attract diplomats as lights attract moths. The first Bush and Clinton administrations worked to "fix" the treaty, leading to a revised agreement in 1994. Washington signed, leading to a cascade of ratifications from other countries. GOP gains in Congress, however, dissuaded the Clinton administration from pushing for ratification. Now George W. Bush has stepped in where Bill Clinton feared to tread.

Unfortunately, the revised treaty retains many of its original flaws. There is still a complicated multinational bureaucracy that sounds like an excerpt from George Orwell's *1984*: At its center is the International Seabed Authority. The Authority (as it calls itself) supervises a mining subsidiary called the Enterprise, ruled by an Assembly, Council, and various commissions and committees. Mining approval would be highly politicized and could discriminate against American operators. Companies that are allowed to mine would owe substantial fees to the Authority and be required to do surveys for the Enterprise, their government-subsidized competitor.

GOP gains in Congress dissuaded the Clinton administration from pushing for ratification. Now George W. Bush has stepped in where Clinton feared to tread.

A mandatory transfer of mining technologies to Third World companies has been watered down. However, "sponsoring states"—that is, governments of nations where mining companies are located—would have to facilitate such transfers if the Enterprise and Third World competitors are "unable to obtain" necessary equipment commercially. Depending on the whims of the Authority, ensuring the "cooperation" of private miners could look very much like mandatory transfers.

The Authority, though so far of modest size, would suffer from the same perverse incentives that afflict the U.N., since the United States would be responsible for 25 percent of the budget but easily outmaneuvered. Proposals by industrialized signatories to limit their contributions have so far received an unfriendly reception. Still, when it signed the Law of the Sea Treaty, the Clinton administration said there was no reason to worry, because the treaty proclaims that "all organs and subsidiary bodies to be established under the Convention and this Agreement shall be cost-effective." Right. Presumably just as cost-effective as the U.N.

The treaty's mining scheme is flawed in its very conception. Although many people once thought untold wealth would leap from the seabed, land-based sources have remained cheaper than expected, and scooping up manganese nodules and other resources from the ocean floor is logistically daunting. There is no guarantee that seabed mining will ever be commercially viable.

Yet this has not dimmed the enthusiasm of the Authority. Like the U.N., it generates lots of reports and paper and obsesses over trivia. Protecting "the emblem, the official seal and the name" of the International Seabed Authority has been a matter of some concern. Among the crises the Authority has confronted: In April 2002 the Jamaican government turned off its air conditioning, necessitating "urgent consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade." A year later Jamaica used the same tactic in an ongoing battle over Authority payments for its

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. A special assistant to President Ronald Reagan, he served as a deputy representative to the third U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

facility. Oh yes, half of the Authority members are behind on their dues.

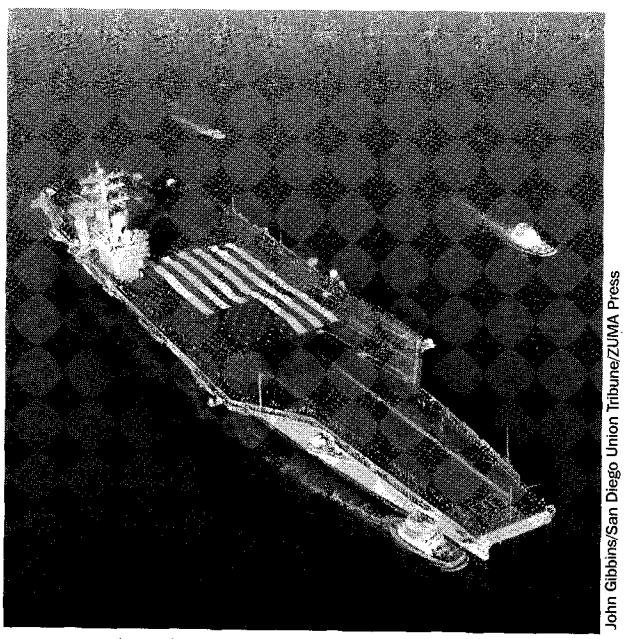
Were seabed mining ever to thrive, a transparent system for recognizing mine sites and resolving disputes would be helpful. But the Authority's purpose isn't to be helpful. It is to redistribute resources to irresponsible Third World governments with a sorry history of squandering abundant foreign aid.

This redistributionist bent is reflected in the treaty's call for financial transfers to developing states and even "peoples who have not attained full independence or other self-governing status"—code for groups such as the PLO. Whatever changes the treaty has undergone, a constant has been Third World pressure for financial transfers. Three voluntary trust funds were established to aid developing countries. Alas, few donors have come forward to subsidize the participation of, say, sub-Saharan African states in the development of ocean mining. Thus, the Authority has had to dip into its own budget to pay into the funds.

Why, given all this, was the Senate Foreign Relations Committee eager to sign on? The treaty is not without benefits. Provisions regarding the environment, resource management, and rights of transit generally are positive, though many reflect what is now customary international law, even in the absence of U.S. ratification. Lugar notes that "law and practice with respect to regulation of activities off our shores is already generally compatible with the Convention." This would seem to be an equally strong argument for *not* ratifying the treaty.

Most influential, though, may be support from the U.S. Navy, which is enamored of the treaty's guarantee of navigational freedom. Not that such freedom is threatened now: The Russian navy is rusting in port, China has yet to develop a blue water capability, and no country is impeding U.S. transit, commercial or military.

At the same time, some ambiguous provisions may impinge on freedoms U.S. shipping now enjoys. In Senate testimony last fall, State Department legal adviser William H. Taft IV noted the importance of conditioning acceptance "upon the understanding that each Party has the exclusive right to determine which of its activities are 'military activities' and that such determination is not subject to review." Whether other members will respect that claim is not at all certain. Admiral Michael G. Mullen, the vice chief of naval operations, acknowledges the possibility that a Law of the Sea tribunal could rule adversely and harm U.S. "operational planning and activities, and our security."



John Gibbins/San Diego Union Tribune/ZUMA Press

The real guarantor of U.S. maritime interests

Moreover, at a time when Washington is combating lawless terrorism, it should be evident that the only sure guarantee of free passage on the seas is the power of the U.S. Navy, combined with friendly relations with the states, few in number, that sit astride important sea lanes. Coastal nations make policy based on perceived national interest, not abstract legal norms. Remember the luckless USS *Pueblo* in 1968? International law did not prevent North Korea from seizing the intelligence ship; approval of the Law of the Sea Treaty would have offered the *Pueblo* no additional protection. America was similarly unaided by international law in its 2001 confrontation with China over our downed EP-3 surveillance plane.

Nor has signing the Law of the Sea Treaty prevented Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, North Korea, Pakistan, and others from making ocean claims deemed excessive by others. Indeed, last October Adm. Mullen warned that the benefits he believed to derive from treaty ratification did not "suggest that countries' attempts to restrict navigation will cease once the United States becomes a party to the Law of the Sea Convention."

Critics of the U.S. refusal to sign in 1982 predicted ocean chaos, but not once has an American ship been denied passage. No country has had either the incentive or the ability to interfere with U.S. shipping. And if they had, the treaty would have been of little help. In 1998 Law of the Sea Treaty supporters agitated for immediate ratification because several special exemptions for the United States were set to expire; Washington did not ratify, and no one seems to have noticed. Now Lugar worries that Washington could "forfeit our seat at the table of institutions that will make decisions about the use of the oceans." Yet last October Assistant Secretary of State John F. Turner told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that America has "had considerable success" in asserting "its oceans interests as a nonparty to the Convention."

Law of the Sea Treaty proponents talk grandly of the need to "restore U.S. leadership," but real leadership can mean saying no as well as yes. Ronald Reagan was right to torpedo the Law of the Sea Treaty two decades ago. Creating a new oceans bureaucracy is no more attractive today. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Homage to William Herrick

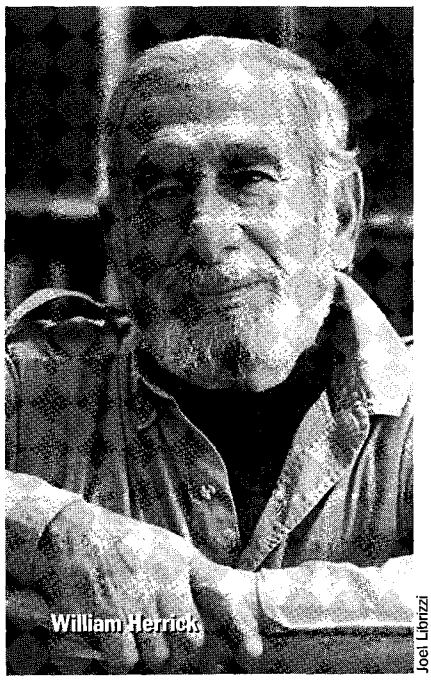
An honorable veteran of a low dishonest decade.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

AN AUTHENTIC and laudable American dissident died at the end of January, his passing almost unnoticed in the mainstream media. William Herrick, 89, was a veteran of the Spanish civil war of 1936-39. He wrote a memoir and 10 novels, one of them a lightly disguised *roman à clef* about the war in Spain.

As late as the 1960s, the Spanish civil war still stirred passionate memory on several continents. Today, it is remembered, if at all, as a rehearsal for World War II. The Axis powers, Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, provided arms, air fleets, and soldiers to assist the right-wing forces of Francisco Franco in their fight against a "democratic" republic, itself aided by Stalin's Soviet Union, a threadbare collection of "International Brigades" under Russian discipline, and then-leftist Mexico. The Spanish republic lost the war, in large part because Soviet assistance was intended to facilitate the capture of a Western European satellite country, in the soon-to-be mold of East Germany, rather than to help the Spanish left defend itself.

One reason the Spanish conflict roused passions is that it was a writers' and intellectuals' war. Ernest Hemingway and André Malraux made stagy appearances for the left; the South African versifier Roy Campbell wrote flamboyant poetry in praise of the Francoists; and, of course, George Orwell produced *Homage to Catalonia*, recounting his experiences as an anti-Franco combatant, as well as his shock and disillusionment to discover that the Soviet "allies" who had come to Spain were mainly intent on suppressing unorthodox revolutionaries and even killing leftists who would not toe the Russian line.


William Herrick

Joel Libnizzi

William Herrick was neither a Hemingway, already packing a big-time reputation when he arrived in Madrid, nor a Malraux, with his dramatic poses—nor even an Orwell, who had completed the memoir *Down and Out in Paris and London*, three novels, and the mordant reportage *The Road to Wigan Pier* by the time he went to Spain.

Herrick, born William Horvitz, in Trenton, N.J., was the son of Jewish immigrants from the Tsarist empire. His parents adhered to the Communist ideology that Herrick would eventually describe as "a kind of brainwashing, . . . a religion. The world's worst." After graduating from high school in the middle of the Great Depression, he embarked on an odyssey unexceptional for his generation, traveling "on the bum" by riding freight trains; participating in an anarchist communal experiment; and finding work in the New York fur trade, dominated by a violent, gangster-style Communist trade union, the Fur and Leather Workers.

The Spanish civil war began in July 1936. Spain was in turmoil. It was Western Europe's weakest link, and the revolutionary excitement present across the industrial nations, caused by the seemingly imminent collapse of capitalism, had fostered strikes and insurrections, as well as terrorism by both left and right. For all onlookers, the Spanish clash had epic qualities: The right saw the Spanish officer corps, which had begun the war by rising against the leftist regime, as crusaders protecting the country and its noble traditions from anarchic brutality. Liberals and leftists perceived the working classes of the great cities, Barcelona and Madrid, as holding back the tide of fascist degradation, almost literally bare-handed.

In November 1936 it appeared Madrid might fall to Franco, and Herrick volunteered for a Soviet-run International Brigade. He was assigned to a unit mostly made up of untrained American youths, the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, commonly known as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The mistitling was not accidental; a Spanish brigade comprised three to four battalions, and the Communists exaggerated their role in the effort.

On February 23, 1937, during fighting near Madrid, Herrick was shot in the neck. The bullet lodged one-sixteenth of an inch from his spinal cord, and could not be removed. He was sent back to the United States, but what he had seen in the ranks of the Communist forces made it impossible for him to remain

Stephen Schwartz, a frequent contributor, coauthored the 1988 study of the Spanish civil war Spanish Marxism vs. Soviet Communism *with the late Catalan historian Victor Alba.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much longer a loyal supporter of the movement. The Hitler-Stalin pact of August 1939 was the last straw. He protested against Moscow's new alliance and was blacklisted from the Fur and Leather Workers' Union.

Herrick resumed his wandering ways, trying various trades and spending time in Hollywood, where he got to know Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth. He married Jeannette, who would be his wife for 54 years and now survives him. At some point, he began working as a court reporter and writing at night, although his first novel, *The Itinerant*, was published only in 1966. His great work was his third novel, *Hermanos!*, which came out in 1969.

Hermanos!—Spanish for "brothers"—was one of a very short list of books by Americans that ripped the veil away from the propaganda legend about Communist heroism in the Spanish war. As Herrick recounted, the American volunteers went into battle without sufficient preparation, and died in horrific numbers. They were not even trained to avoid bunching up in groups, an instinctive action for people under fire but one that makes them easier targets. The "Lincoln" heroes were sent to an ignominious death by stone-hearted commissars.

In a later book, an unembellished memoir entitled *Jumping the Line: The Adventures and Misadventures of an American Radical*, he revealed the other terrible secret of the American Communists who went to Spain: that they had been used as executioners of dissenting Spanish leftists. After all, they had none of the local loyalties that made it difficult for the Russians to use Spaniards themselves for such tasks, and the American Communists' dedication to Stalin could not be doubted.

Herrick was the exception. The ghastly betrayal of leftist promises he had seen in Spain forced him to tell his story, and even led him to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. He was labeled a "snitch" by his ex-Communist associates, who themselves smilingly covered up the atrocities of the Kremlin.

Courageous dedication to truth is seldom adequately rewarded. In publicity put out by the New Directions Publishing Corporation, which issued his later novels, Herrick's death was overshadowed by the centenary of Pablo Neruda, the Stalinist poet who assisted in the plot to murder Trotsky. The paperback edition of *Jumping the Line* has come out from a San Francisco publisher that, without irony, specializes in books promoting anarchist terrorism. The *New York Times* devoted 163 words to Herrick's passing.

Yet Bill Herrick was one of those whose lives, and whose writings, must not be neglected if we are to understand the century from which we have just emerged, as well as the century before us. ♦

JOB LOSSES UNDER THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

Michael Ramirez

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Taxing Debate

Congress is going to be arguing about the Bush tax cuts for the rest of the year. BY GARY J. ANDRES

THE LAST THREE YEARS have been good for taxpayers, as Congress and the president worked together to reduce levies on three separate occasions. Now it's year four of the Bush administration and, while the deficit balloons and Democrats play class politics in the presidential election, the general debate has shifted to whether tax cuts should be reversed. Republicans should take this as an invitation to extend the president's tax cuts and perhaps try to make them permanent.

The status quo is such that even in the Republican-controlled Congress, the debate concerns only stopping tax increases, rather than cutting rates any further. The news gets worse for workers: This year, taxes will actually go up if several popular provisions that expire at the end of this year are not extended.

True, a tax increase with Republicans in control of all the levers of power is about as likely as Bobby Knight becoming the Anger Management Association's Man of the Year. But Democrats will work tirelessly to deny Republicans victories on any legislative initiative, particularly if it means building on past tax-cut wins. And such a showdown would actually benefit Republicans.

GOP leaders have two options for trying to pass tax legislation this year, neither of which is perfect. One is through the budget process, which reaches the Senate floor this week and the House floor next week; the other calls for passing the expiring tax provisions, separately or as a package, outside the budget debate.

The four popular tax provisions that expire this year are the child tax credit, relief from the marriage penalty, alternative minimum tax relief for individuals, and a broadened lowest bracket for low-income taxpayers. If these expire, a family of four earning $40,000 will have a $915 tax increase next year.

GOP leaders in the House have the votes and flexibility to extend these measures as part of a comprehensive budget package or even as four separate bills. House Republicans, over the next few months, will likely do both, forcing Democrats to cast multiple votes supporting tax increases. Republicans in the Senate may also choose a two-pronged approach, but for different reasons.

Four popular tax provisions are set to expire this year. If they do, a family of four earning $40,000 will have a $915 tax increase next year.

In the Senate, any one member can filibuster, bogging things down to block passage of a stand-alone tax bill. So Republicans will use the so-called reconciliation process, generated by passage of a congressional budget resolution. The "reconciliation bill," which Congress would take up sometime this summer if lawmakers agree on a budget resolution this month, receives special procedural protections, including time limits on debate. Also, it's "filibuster proof," meaning it can pass with only 51 votes. This is how the Senate passed the last two major tax bills.

But here's the catch. Any legislation passed in this fashion lasts only as long as the period specified in the budget resolution. So, because Congress will pass a five-year budget, any tax changes passed as part of it can only be extended for five years. That's one reason tax changes made under this process are expiring in the first place and why no tax provision can be made permanent using this procedure.

The other option is to bring these expiring tax provisions up, separately or as a package, outside the reconciliation process. This way the tax cuts could become permanent. Republicans in the House have the votes to pass such extensions. Republicans in the Senate do not.

Trying to pass a tax bill in the Senate, even if it included popular items like the child tax credit or marriage penalty reforms, would be a Herculean task. Many Democrats, including presidential candidate and senator John Kerry, say they support extending these popular provisions. But there's no doubt their political instincts to deny Republicans a "win" on taxes will overwhelm the need to extend middle-class tax relief.

It currently looks like Republican senators will exercise both procedural options at their disposal. First, they will use the budget resolution to generate a reconciliation bill, extending the provisions that expire at the end of 2004. Later, the Senate Finance Committee will produce a separate bill. One GOP leadership aide predicts Democrats will "amend this bill to death or simply object to its consideration." Either way, Democrats can be exposed as trying to pave the way for taxes to be raised on middle-class Americans.

Given the rules of the Senate, passing a bill that would make the expiring 2004 tax provisions or any others permanent is not in the cards this year. All the same, Republicans will be in a position to pass legislation to avoid a tax increase and put Democrats in the hot seat. It's not everything the Republican heart desires, but it's a lot. ◆

Gary J. Andres, a principal at the Dutko Group, writes a weekly column in the Washington Times.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Gift of Self-Reliance

Philister Randiki of Kenya with her calf.

Around the world, Heifer International is working—in partnership with families and other organizations to impoverished, undernourished families across the globe. We're training them in animal care and environmentally sound agricultural practices.

Participants lift themselves out of poverty and become self-reliant. They pass on the gift—the share offspring of livestock—to others in their community. As recipients share their livestock and their knowledge, the ever-expanding network of hope and dignity is created in villages around the world.

Heifer International's decades of experience and worldwide network of programs earned it the spot in Forbes's Gold Star List of the top charities most worthy of donor support, a new feature in the magazine's 2009 Investment Guide.

Visit us at **www.heifer.org**, and learn how easy it is to give a gift of lasting livelihood and true independence.

Photos: top, bottom left, and bottom right, © Bary Ward; Heifer Photo/Bradley. All contents © Heifer International.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Perpetual Adolescent

And the triumph of the youth culture

By Joseph Epstein

Whenever anyone under the age of 50 sees old newsreel film of Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak of 1941, he is almost certain to be brought up by the fact that nearly everyone in the male-dominated crowds—in New York, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland—seems to be wearing a suit and a fedora or other serious adult hat. The people in those earlier baseball crowds, though watching a boyish game, nonetheless had a radically different conception of themselves than most Americans do now. A major depression was ending, a world war was on. Even though they were watching an entertainment that took most of them back to their boyhoods, they thought of themselves as adults, no longer kids, but grown-ups, adults, men.

How different from today, when a good part of the crowd at any ballgame, no matter what the age, is wearing jeans and team caps and T-shirts; and let us not neglect those (one hopes) benign maniacs who paint their faces in home-team colors or spell out, on their bare chests, the letters of the names of star players: S-O-S-A.

Part of the explanation for the suits at the ballpark in DiMaggio's day is that in the 1940s and even '50s there weren't a lot of sport, or leisure, or casual clothes around. Unless one lived at what H.L. Mencken called "the country-club stage of culture"—unless, that is, one golfed, played tennis, or sailed—one was likely to own only the clothes one worked in or better. Far from casual Fridays, in those years there weren't even casual Sundays. Wearing one's "Sunday best," a cliché of the time, meant wearing the good clothes one reserved for church.

Dressing down may first have set in on the West Coast, where a certain informality was thought to be a new way of life. In the 1960s, in universities casual dress became absolutely *de rigueur* among younger faculty, who, in their ardor to destroy any evidence of their being implicated in evil hierarchy, wished not merely to seem in no wise different from their students but, more important, to seem always young; and the quickest path to youthfulness was teaching in jeans, T-shirts, and the rest of it.

This informality has now been institutionalized. Few are the restaurants that could any longer hope to stay in business if they required men to wear a jacket and tie. Today one sees men wearing baseball caps—some worn backwards—while eating indoors in quite good restaurants. In an episode of *The Sopranos*, Tony Soprano, the mafia don, representing life of a different day, finds this so outrages his sense of decorum that, in a restaurant he frequents, he asks a man, in a quiet but entirely menacing way, to remove his goddamn hat.

Life in that different day was felt to observe the human equivalent of the Aristotelian unities: to have, like a good drama, a beginning, middle, and end. Each part, it was understood, had its own advantages and detractions, but the middle—adulthood—was the lengthiest and most earnest part, where everything serious happened and much was at stake. To violate the boundaries of any of the three divisions of life was to go against what was natural and thereby to appear unseemly, to put one's world somehow out of joint, to be, let us face it, a touch, and perhaps more than a touch, grotesque.

Today, of course, all this has been shattered. The ideal almost everywhere is to seem young for as long as possible. The health clubs and endemic workout clothes, the enormous increase in cosmetic surgery (for women and men), the special youth-oriented television programming and moviemaking, all these are merely the more obvious signs of the triumph of youth culture. When I say youth culture, I do not mean merely that the young today are transcendent, the group most admired among the various age groups in American society, but that youth is no longer viewed as a transitory state, through which one passes on the way from childhood to adulthood, but an

Joseph Epstein is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard *and the author of* Fabulous Small Jews *and* Envy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aspiration, a vaunted condition in which, if one can only arrange it, to settle in perpetuity.

This phenomenon is not something that happened just last night; it has been underway for decades. Nor is it something that can be changed even by an event as cataclysmic as that of September 11, which at first was thought to be so sobering as to tear away all shreds of American innocence. As a generalization, it allows for a wide variety of exceptions. There still are adults in America; if names are wanted, I would set out those of Alan Greenspan, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Robert Rubin, Warren Buffett, Sol Linowitz, and many more. But such men and women, actual grown-ups, now begin to appear a bit anomalous; they no longer seem representative of the larger culture.

The shift into youth culture began in earnest, I suspect, during the 10 or so years following 1951, the year of the publication of *Catcher in the Rye*. Salinger's novel exalts the purity of youth and locates the enemy—a clear case of Us versus Them—in those who committed the sin of having grown older, which includes Holden Caulfield's pain-in-the-neck parents, his brother (the sellout screenwriter), and just about everyone else who has passed beyond adolescence and had the rather poor taste to remain alive.

The case for the exaltation of the young is made in Wordsworth's "Intimation of Immortality," with its idea that human beings are born with great wisdom from which life in society weans them slowly but inexorably. Plato promulgated this same idea long before: For him we all had wisdom in the womb, but it was torn from us at the exact point that we came into the world. Rousseau gave it a French twist, arguing that human beings are splendid all-round specimens—noble savages, really—with life out in society turning us mean and loutish, which is another way of saying that the older we are, the worse we get. We are talking about romanticism here, friend, which never favors the mature, let alone the aged.

The triumph of youth culture has conquered perhaps nowhere more completely than in the United States. The John F. Kennedy administration, with its emphasis on youthfulness, beginning with its young president—the first president routinely not to wear a serious hat—gave it its first public prominence. Soon after the assassination of Kennedy, the Free Speech Movement, which spearheaded the student revolution, positively enshrined the young. Like Yeats's Byzantium, the sixties utopia posited by the student radicals was "no country for old men" or women. One of the many tenets in its credo—soon to become a cliché, but no less significant for that—was that no one over 30 was to be trusted. (If you were part of that movement and 21 years old in 1965, you are 60 today. Good morning, Sunshine.)

Music was a key element in the advance of youth culture. The dividing moment here is the advent of Elvis. On one side were those who thought Elvis an amusing and largely freakish phenomenon—a bit of a joke—and on the other, those who took him dead seriously as a figure of youthful rebellion, the musical equivalent of James Dean in the movie *Rebel Without a Cause*, another early winning entry in the glorification-of-youth sweepstakes then forming. Rock 'n' roll presented a vinyl curtain, with those committed to retaining their youth on one side, those wanting to claim adulthood on the other. The Beatles, despite the very real charms of their non-druggie music, solidified things. So much of hard rock 'n' roll came down to nothing more than a way of saying bugger off to adult culture.

Reinforcement for these notions—they were not yet so coherent as to qualify as ideas—was to be found in the movies. Movies for some years now have been made not only increasingly for the young but by the young. I once worked on a movie script with a producer who one day announced to me that it was his birthday. When I wished him happy returns of the day, he replied that it wasn't so happy for him; he was turning 41, an uncomfortably old age in Hollywood for someone who hadn't many big success-scalps on his belt.

Robert Redford, though now in his mid-sixties, remains essentially a guy in jeans, a handsome graduate student with wrinkles. Paul Newman, now in his late seventies, seems uncomfortable in a suit. Hugh Grant, the English actor, may be said to be professionally boyish, and in a recent role, in the movie *About a Boy*, is described in the *New York Times* as a character who "surrounds himself with gadgets, videos, CDs, and other toys" and who "is doing everything in his power to avoid growing up." The actor Jim Carrey, who is 42, not long ago said of the movie *The Majestic*, in which he stars, "It's about manhood. It's about adulthood," as if italicizing the rarity of such movies. He then went on to speak about himself in standard self-absorbed adolescent fashion: "You've got that hole you're left with by whatever your parents couldn't give you." Poor baby.

Jim Carrey's roles in movies resemble nothing so much as comic-book characters come to life. And why, just now, does so much of contemporary entertainment come in the form of animation or comic-book cartooning? Such television shows as *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill*, the occasional back page in the *New York Times Book Review* or the *New Yorker* and the comic-book novel, all seem to feel that the animated cartoon and comic-book formats are very much of the moment. They are of course right, at least if you think of your audience as adolescent,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or, more precisely, as being unwilling quite to detach themselves from their adolescence.

Recent history has seemed to be on the side of keeping people from growing up by supplying only a paucity of stern tests of the kind out of which adulthood is usually formed. We shall never have another presidential candidate tested by the Depression or by his experience in World War II. These were events that proved crucibles for the formation of adult character, not to say manliness. Henceforth all future presidential—and congressional—candidates will come with a shortage of what used to pass for significant experience. Crises for future politicians will doubtless be about having to rethink their lives when they didn't get into Brown or found themselves unequipped emotionally for Stanford Business School.

Corporate talent these days feels no weightier. Pictures of heads of corporations in polo shirts with designer logos in the business section of the *New York Times*, fresh from yet another ephemeral merger, or acquiring an enormous raise after their company has recorded another losing year, do not inspire confidence. "The trouble with Enron," said an employee of the company in the aftermath of that corporation's appalling debacle, "is that there weren't any grown-ups."

Crises for future politicians will doubtless be about having to rethink their lives when they didn't get into Brown.

The increasing affluence the United States enjoyed after World War II, extending into the current day, also contributed heavily to forming the character I've come to think of as the perpetual American adolescent. Earlier, with less money around, people were forced to get serious, to grow up—and fast. How quickly the Depression generation was required to mature! How many stories one used to hear about older brothers going to work at 18 or earlier, so that a younger brother might be allowed to go to college, or simply to help keep the family afloat! With lots of money around, certain kinds of pressure were removed. More and more people nowadays are working, as earlier generations were not, with a strong safety net of money under them. All options opened, they now swim in what Kierkegaard called "a sea of possibilities," and one of these possibilities in America is to refuse to grow up for a longer period than has been permitted any other people in history.

All this is reinforced by the play of market forces, which strongly encourage the mythical dream of perpetual youthfulness. The promise behind 95 percent of all advertising is that of recaptured youth, whose deeper promise is lots more sex yet to go. The ads for the $5,000 wristwatch, the $80,000 car, the khakis, the vodka, the pharmaceuticals to regrow hair and recapture ardor, all whisper display me, drive me, wear me, drink me, swallow me, and you stop the clock—youth, Baby, is yours.

The whole sweep of advertising, which is to say of market, culture since soon after World War II has been continuously to lower the criteria of youthfulness while extending the possibility for seeming youthful to older and older people. To make the very young seem older—all those 10- and 12-year-old Britney Spears and Jennifer Lopez imitators, who already know more about brand-name logos than I do about English literature—is another part of the job. It's not a conspiracy, mind you, not six or eight international ad agencies meeting in secret to call the shots, but the dynamics of marketing itself, finding a way to make it more profitable all around by convincing the young that they can seem older and the old that they can seem a lot younger. Never before has it been more difficult to obey the injunction to act one's age.

Two of the great television sitcom successes of recent years, *Seinfeld* and *Friends*, though each is different in its comic tone, are united by the theme of the permanent adolescent loose in the big city. One takes the characters in *Seinfeld* to be in their middle to late thirties, those in *Friends* in their late twenties to early thirties. Charming though they may be, both sets of characters are oddly stunted. They aren't quite anywhere and don't seem to be headed anywhere, either. Time is suspended for them. Aimless and shameless, they are in the grip of the everyday *Sturm und Drang* of adolescent self-absorption. Outside their rather temporary-looking apartments, they scarcely exist. Personal relations provide the full drama of their lives. Growth and development aren't part of the deal. They are still, somehow, in spirit, locked in a high school of the mind, eating dry cereal, watching a vast quantity of television, hoping to make ecstatic sexual scores. Apart from the high sheen of the writing and the comic skill of the casts, I wonder if what really attracts people to these shows—*Friends* still, *Seinfeld* in its reruns—isn't the underlying identification with the characters because of the audience's own longing for a perpetual adolescence, cut loose, free of responsibility, without the real pressures that life, that messy business, always exerts.

Time for the perpetual adolescents is curiously static. They are in no great hurry: to succeed, to get work, to lay down achievements. Perhaps this is partly because longevity has increased in recent decades—if one doesn't make it to 90 nowadays, one feels slightly cheated—but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more likely it is that time doesn't seem to the perpetual adolescent the excruciatingly finite matter, the precious commodity, it indubitably is. For the perpetual adolescent, time is almost endlessly expandable. Why not go to law school in one's late thirties, or take the premed requirements in one's early forties, or wait even later than that to have children? Time enough to toss away one's twenties, maybe even one's thirties; 40 is soon enough to get serious about life; maybe 50, when you think about it, is the best time really to get going in earnest.

The old hunger for life, the eagerness to get into the fray, has been replaced by an odd patience that often looks more like passivity. In the 1950s, people commonly married in their twenties, which may or may not have been a good thing, but marriage did prove a forcing house into adulthood, for men and women, especially where children issued from the marriage, which they usually did fairly quickly. I had two sons by the time I was 26, which, among other things, made it impossible, either physically or spiritually, for me to join the general youth movement of the 1960s, even though I still qualified by age. It also required me to find a vocation. By 30, one was supposed to be settled in life: wife, children, house, job—"the full catastrophe," as Zorba the Greek liked to say. But it was also a useful catastrophe. Today most people feel that they can wait to get serious about life. Until then one is feeling one's way, still deciding, shopping around, contributing to the formation of a new psychological type: the passive-nonaggressive.

Not everywhere is nonaggression the psychological mode of choice. One hears about the young men and women working the 14-hour days at low six-figure jobs in front-line law firms; others sacrificing to get into MBA programs, for the single purpose of an early financial score. But even here one senses an adolescent spirit to the proceedings. The old model for ambition was solid hard work that paid off over time. One began at a low wage, worked one's way up through genuine accomplishment, grew wealthier as one grew older, and, with luck, retired with a sense of financial security and pleasure in one's achievement. But the new American ambition model features the kid multimillionaire—the young man or woman who breaks the bank not long out of college. An element of adolescent impatience enters in here—I want it, *now!*—and also an element of continued youthfulness.

The model of the type may be the professional athlete. "The growth of professional basketball over the past twenty-odd years, from a relatively minor spectator sport to a mass-cultural phenomenon," notes Rebecca Mead, in the *New Yorker*, "is an example of the way in which all of American culture is increasingly geared to the tastes of teenage boys." Mead writes this in an article about Shaquille O'Neal, the 32-year-old center for the Los Angeles Lakers, who earns, with endorsements, 30-odd million dollars a year and lives the life of the most privileged possible junior high school boy: enjoying food fights, go-carts, motorcycles, the run of high rides at amusement parks. It may be a wonderful, but it's also a strange life.

And yet what is so wrong about any of this? If one wants to dress like a kid, spin around the office on a scooter, not make up one's mind about what work one wants to do until one is 40, be noncommittal in one's relationships—what, really, are the consequences? I happen to think that the consequences are genuine, and fairly serious.

"Obviously it is normal to think of oneself as younger than one is," W.H. Auden, a younger son, told Robert Craft, "but fatal to want to be younger." I'm not sure about fatal, but it is at a minimum degrading for a culture at large to want to be younger. The tone of national life is lowered, made less rich. The first thing lowered is expectations, intellectual and otherwise. To begin with education, one wonders if the dumbing down of culture one used to hear so much about and which continues isn't connected to the rise of the perpetual adolescent.

Consider contemporary journalism, which tends to play everything to lower and lower common denominators. Why does the *New York Times*, with its pretensions to being our national newspaper, choose to put on its front pages stories about Gennifer Flowers's career as a chanteuse in New Orleans, the firing of NFL coaches, the retirement of Yves Saint Laurent, the canceling of the singer Mariah Carey's recording contract? Slow-news days is a charitable guess; a lowered standard of the significant is a more realistic one. Since the advent of its new publisher, a man of the baby boomer generation, an aura of juvenilia clings to the paper. Frank Rich and Maureen Dowd, two of the paper's most-read columnists, seem not so much the type of the bright college student but of the sassy high-school student—the clever, provocative editor of the school paper out to shock the principal—even though both are in their early fifties.

Television comes closer and closer to being a wholly adolescent form of communication. Clicking the remote from major network news shows, one slides smoothly from superficiality to triviality. When Tom Brokaw announces that some subject will be covered "In Depth," what he really means is that roughly 90 seconds, perhaps two minutes, will be devoted to it. It's scarcely original to note that much of contemporary journalism, print and electronic, is pitched to the short attention span, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

soundbite, photo-op, quickie take, the deep distaste for complexity—in short, so much is pitched to the adolescent temperament.

Political correctness and so many of the political fashions of our day—from academic feminism to cultural studies to queer theory—could only be perpetrated on adolescent minds: minds, that is, that are trained to search out one thing and one thing only: Is my teacher, or this politician, or that public spokesman, saying something that is likely to be offensive to me or members of any other victim group? Only an adolescent would find it worthwhile to devote his or her attention chiefly to the hunting of offenses, the possibility of slights, real and imagined.

Self-esteem, of which one currently hears so much, is at bottom another essentially adolescent notion. The great psychological sin of our day is to violate the self-esteem of adolescents of all ages. One might have thought that such self-esteem as any of us is likely to command would be in place by the age of 18. (And what is the point of having all that much self-esteem anyhow, since its logical culminating point can only be smug complacence?) Even in nursing homes, apparently, patients must be guarded against a feeling of their lowered consequence in the world. Self-esteem has become a womb to tomb matter, so that, in contemporary America, the inner and the outer child can finally be made one in the form of the perpetual adolescent.

The coarsening of American culture seems part of the adolescent phenomenon. Television commercials have gotten grosser and grosser. The level of profanity on prime-time television shows has risen greatly over the years. Flicks known to their audiences as "gross-out movies," featuring the slimy and hideous, are part of the regular film menu. Florence King, writing about this phenomenon in her column in the *National Review*, noted: "Since arrested development is as American as apple pie, it is easy to identify the subconscious motivation of the adult male Ughs who produce all these revolting movies and commercials." What makes these things possible is what is known as "niche programming," or the aiming of entertainment at quite specific segments of the audience—African Americans, or teenagers, or the educated classes, or the beer brutes. But increasingly, apparently, we are all being forced into that largest of niches, the American adolescent mentality.

Consider now what must be taken as the most consequential adolescent act in American history during the past half century: the Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky relationship. I hesitate to call it an affair, because an affair implies a certain adult style: the good hotel room, the bottle of excellent wine, the peignoir, the Sulka pajamas. With Bill and Monica, you had instead the pizza, the canoodling under the desk, the cigar business, even the whole thing going without consummation. No matter what one's politics, one has to admit that our great national scandal was pure high school.

In a 1959 review of Iona and Peter Opie's *The Lore and Language of School Children*, the poet Philip Larkin revealed first sensing a sharp waning of his interest in Christianity when he read the Bible verse that promises one will return to one's childish state upon entry into Heaven. Larkin wanted nothing more to do with being a child or with the company of children. He looked forward to "money, keys, wallets, letters, books, long-playing records, drinks, the opposite sex, and other solaces of adulthood."

I wanted these things, too, and as soon as possible. From roughly the age of 14, I wanted to stay out all night, to dress like Fred Astaire, to drink and smoke cigarettes with the elegance of William Powell, to have the company of serious women like Susan Hayward and Ingrid Bergman. As I grew older, I sadly began to realize it wasn't going to happen, at least not in the way I had hoped. What happened instead was the triumph of youth culture, with its adoration of youth, in and for itself, and as a time in one's life of purity and goodness always in danger of being despoiled by the corruption of growing older, which is also to say, of "growing up."

At a certain point in American life, the young ceased to be viewed as a transient class and youth as a phase of life through which everyone soon passed. Instead, youthfulness was vaunted and carried a special moral status. Adolescence triumphed, becoming a permanent condition. As one grew older, one was presented with two choices, to seem an old fogey for attempting to live according to one's own standard of adulthood, or to go with the flow and adapt some variant of pulling one's long gray hair back into a ponytail, struggling into the spandex shorts, working on those abs, and ending one's days among the Rip Van With-Its. Not, I think, a handsome set of alternatives.

The greatest sins, Santayana thought, are those that set out to strangle human nature. This is of course what is being done in cultivating perpetual adolescence, while putting off maturity for as long as possible. Maturity provides a more articulated sense of the ebb and flow, the ups and downs, of life, a more subtly reticulated graph of human possibility. Above all, it values a clear and fit conception of reality. Maturity is ever cognizant that the clock is running, life is finite, and among the greatest mistakes is to believe otherwise. Maturity doesn't exclude playfulness or high humor. Far from it. The mature understand that the bitterest joke of all is that the quickest way to grow old lies in the hopeless attempt to stay forever young. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Battle of the Biographies

Bush v. Kerry

By Noemie Emery

Bring it on! And there they stand, thumbs in their belts, snorting at each other from opposite corners—the Vietnam vet with three Purple Hearts and numerous medals, and the commander in chief, architect of two wars, with one bad guy's scalp on his belt. Are they tough? Are you kidding? But wait. Alter the slant of the light, and things appear more complex. In this corner is the decorated Vietnam vet who risked his life on the battlefield but turned into the ultimate risk-averse politician, carefully tending his political interests and force-averse when it comes to security issues. And in that one is the man whose service when young was adequate but not glorious, but who as president has taken one huge risk after another.

The first test of manhood for both of them came in the late 1960s near the playing fields of New Haven. John Kerry, Yale class of 1966, enlisted in the Navy and was sent to Vietnam the year after. On his first tour of duty, he was a deck officer on the USS *Gridley*. His second was commanding a Swift boat in the Mekong Delta, intercepting supplies and reinforcements sent down from the north. He was wounded three times, and won a Bronze Star when he risked his life to pull a shipmate out of the river during a firefight. He won a Silver Star when he steered his boat into enemy fire, beached it, and chased down, shot, and killed a Viet Cong guerrilla about to aim a rocket launcher at his men.

About the same time (May 1968), George W. Bush, Yale class of 1968, spoke to the commander of the 147th Fighter Group in Houston about joining the Texas National Guard. Known as the "Champagne Unit," the 147th was stocked to the gills with the children of Texas's prominent families: Among the recruits whom Bush palled around with were the children of two future secretaries of the Treasury: Lloyd Bentsen III, whose father would beat Bush's father in a Senate race in 1970, and John Connally III, son of the governor who had been shot and wounded alongside John Kennedy in 1963. It was also a place to wait out the war, with little prospect of fighting it. "It was an unofficial rule that most people joining the 147th in the mid-sixties would not be going to Vietnam," writes Bill Minutaglio, Bush's biographer. "Only 15,000 of the [U.S.] total of 1,040,000 Guardsmen and reservists would be sent." Bush's pilot training was hardly risk-free. But the fact remains that Kerry had put himself in harm's way, and then performed bravely. Give Kerry round one.

In the late 1960s, then, Kerry won the first round in the great manhood sweepstakes, and he continued to win it for some years thereafter, partly because, as compared with George W., he simply looked more like a man. Kerry (like Bush's father) bloomed early and seemed to have always been old. Or older than most other people his age, and often more lonely and serious. As Evan Thomas writes, Kerry at St. Paul's, his New Hampshire prep school, was "stiff and somewhat joyless." He was, as a friend there put it, "born old." A hero at 25, he was a celebrity at 27, when he came home to lead the antiwar veterans, demonstrate on the Mall, and testify before Congress. He launched a nationwide speaking tour, became a hero to students, and was interviewed on *60 Minutes*, where he was asked if he wished to be president. (His answer was "No.")

Bush by contrast was the perpetual prankster, a man who seemed always a boy. While Kerry was being elected lieutenant governor of Massachusetts in 1982, and senator two years later, Bush was engaged in failed business ventures and drinking heavily. Inspired by his initials—JFK—Kerry decided on public life as a child. Bush, in his forties, was still wondering what he wanted to be when he grew up. In his book *All the Presidents' Children*, Bush's friend Doug Wead puts a new slant on this story, seeing George W. Bush as having escaped by mere inches the fate of a great many sons of presidents (especially first sons and presidents' namesakes), who lived out their lives as perennial children, or tried and failed to match Dad, and

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cracked. What seems clear is that Bush was very much still his father's son in 1988 when that father was elected president; and it was only after his father had lost big in public that his own serious life could begin. "George is the family clown," one of his brothers told Wead in 1988, the year their father was elected president. No one ever called Kerry a clown, in or outside of his family. Give Kerry round two.

George W. Bush, who avoided combat in Vietnam, was nonetheless turned by war into a combat politician, taking stark stands, making raids into unknown and perilous country, exposing his flanks to political enemies. At the same time, John Kerry, who in war had taken risks beyond measure, took extraordinary steps to shelter himself in his political life. Coming home as a hero in a war that was increasingly seen as a source of contention, he positioned himself on all sides of the question, giving every side something to cling to. His heroism established, he protested the war, becoming a hero to those who despised the armed forces. Having risked his life many times to save those around him, he accused the U.S. armed forces of terrible deeds. The signature event occurred in the April 1971 protest, when he threw another soldier's medals onto the steps of the Capitol. A self-centered nature, not seen on the battlefield, started to come to the fore. He became (in the *Washington Post*'s paraphrase of his critics) "someone who votes one way and then describes those votes another way, . . . a politician who changes with the times."

CORBIS / Rick Friedman

Kerry's MO is to support something (or at least not attack it) and then attack people who act on his words. He attacks Bush for trashing the Kyoto Treaty, but did not support it when it came up in the Senate; voted for Bush's education program, and then savaged it; supported the Patriot Act, and savaged John Ashcroft when he carried it out. He was for a unilateral American foreign policy when proposed by Bill Clinton, against it when suggested by either George Bush. There is always an "out" built into his positions. "While trying to do the right thing, Kerry has always sought to make himself a thinner target," William Saletan observed in *Slate*. "He was for affirmative action, just not *this* affirmative action. He was for a drug war, just not *this* drug war. He was for an Iraq war, just not *this* Iraq war." He is for everything in the abstract but not in the particular, and never in the way it's carried out. He is for an ideal, but never in the form presented; for weapons systems, but not those actually proposed; for the use of force, but under no conditions that anybody can imagine or foresee. He voted against the first Gulf War in 1991, but said he was not against using force then, and he voted for the second Gulf War in 2002, but said he never imagined that force would be used. In 2002, 2003, and 2004, he attacked George Bush the younger for not having taken the route followed by George Bush the elder, which he hadn't supported at the time. In 1991, he accused the elder George Bush of a "rush into war" (does this sound familiar?) and derided his coalition as "bizarre new bedfellows" and "shadowy battlefield allies."

Thus, Kerry played up his support for the war when that appeared popular, and changed to attacking it when he faced an antiwar electorate in the primary states. When Howard Dean soared in early polling, Kerry assailed Bush from the left for having started the war. When Saddam was captured, Kerry trumpeted his support for the war, and attacked Dean from the right. Then the Kay report came out, and Kerry switched back again. (Look for a new switch when Osama bin Laden is captured; *c'est la guerre*.) Even the attack by his campaign on Bush as a "deserter" for his National Guard record is an unprincipled switch from Kerry's rhetoric in 1992, when the draft-dodging Bill Clinton was running for president: "I am saddened by the fact that Vietnam has yet again been inserted into the campaign. . . . We do not need to divide America over who served and how," he said then on the floor of the Senate.

To be fair, Kerry's shortage of spine does not stand out in his party. The *Washington Post* reported of the Iraq war vote in September 2002: "More than a dozen Democrats who requested anonymity have told the *Post* that many members who oppose the president's strategy . . . are going to nonetheless support it because they fear a backlash from voters." And ABC News's *The Note* speculated two months later that "if there were a secret-ballot vote, . . . Democrats in the House and Senate would vote overwhelmingly to repeal the Bush-Baucus tax cuts and to stop the president from going to war with Iraq." *Slate*'s Saletan wrote that he remains "mystified at how a man who braved bullets can be so terrified at being pinned down on a political issue." So are the rest of us. Confronted with a monstrous attack on his country (and the prospect of new ones that would be even greater), Bush came up with a coherent and serious policy and staked his career and reputation on its outcome. While some Democrats, Joe Lieberman and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the late Paul Wellstone among them, did vote on principle, there were numerous others—Kerry chief among them—who put their political interests uppermost. Give round three to Bush.

Between 1945 and 1992, every president of the United States had served in the armed forces, and from 1952 to 1992, each had been a veteran of World War II. Three of these can be fairly described as war heroes: five star general Dwight David Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe, and two young naval officers of the next generation, John F. Kennedy and George H.W. Bush. In the 1990s, some other decorated veterans also rose to prominence as presidential candidates, notably Vietnam veterans John McCain, John Kerry, and Bob Kerrey. And World War II veteran Bob Dole enjoyed his last hurrah at the top of the Republican ticket in 1996. Of these, McCain endured six years in captivity, Kerrey lost a leg, Dole had one arm rendered practically useless, and Kerry won three Purple Hearts. George H.W. Bush and John Kennedy were not wounded, but each nearly was drowned in the Pacific Ocean in combat.

AFP / Maurey Tannen

World War II was a war that swept up all classes, and that young men trooped to join. Vietnam was a war that many resisted, and went to great lengths to evade. Men who were young in the Vietnam War era tended to fall into three camps: those who served (McCain, Kerry, and Kerrey), those who ducked out completely (Howard Dean and Bill Clinton), and those who managed to serve in the technical sense, not bringing shame to their prominent families, while minimizing the risk to themselves. These included Al Gore, who went to Vietnam as a journalist in a greatly reduced tour of duty; and George W. Bush and Dan Quayle, among many others, who stayed stateside in the National Guard. Quayle's service in the National Guard was used as an issue against him in 1988 by the Democrats, who later discovered, when Bill Clinton ran against George Bush the elder and then Bob Dole, that military service was not that important, and surely not key as a measure of character. If Howard Dean, who spent a very good war skiing in Aspen, were now the candidate, you can be sure that the matter of George W. Bush's war service would not have been raised by the Democrats.

In itself, though, a record of being a war hero or veteran doesn't say much about someone's ability to make sound judgments on defense and security matters, much less run a government. George Washington was a good general and a great president. Dwight Eisenhower was a good general and a good president. Ulysses S. Grant was a great general, and one of the worst presidents the country has ever seen. War hero John McCain gets it about war and security. Former Georgia senator and Vietnam veteran Max Cleland didn't; he took Tom Daschle's bad advice to put union interests ahead of the president's ability to move people around in a crisis by voting against the homeland security bill.

War hero John Kennedy (the real JFK) got it, and was an aggressive cold warrior. War hero Bob Kerrey (the real Kerry) gets it, as in this interview he gave the *New York Sun*: "I think [Iraq] is going well. It breaks my heart whenever anybody dies, but we liberated 25 million people. . . . It puts us on the side of democracy in the Arab world. Twenty years from now, we'll be hard pressed to find anyone who says it wasn't worth the effort. . . . This is not just another democracy. This is a democracy in the Arab world." John Kerry, on the other hand, didn't get the Cold War and doesn't get the new war on terror. He complains still about Reagan's "illegal" war in Central America, which only looks better with each passing year. The nonexistent war record of Franklin D. Roosevelt was always a sore point with his Oyster Bay cousins, who suffered sorely in war, and won numerous medals. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. was one of the bravest soldiers who ever existed, but it was Franklin—who toured World War I sites in a limousine, and saw war itself from a very great distance—who had the guile and ruthlessness to be a wartime commander in chief. FDR's fan Ronald Reagan, who spent World War II in Hollywood, got the Cold War in ways Navy officer Jimmy Carter and bomber pilot George McGovern did not.

If it is hard to extrapolate from the frat boy he once was to the grim and driven President George W. Bush of the present, it is just as hard to project the self-protective, self-serving John Kerry from the daredevil hero who served in Vietnam. Lives do not always proceed in predictable patterns, and we may have a choice between a classic late bloomer who has just reached his powers, and a morning glory, who hit his peak early and has not matched it since. In the late 1960s, John Kerry was the better man, as well as the far more mature one. In 2004, in terms of political maturity and courage, the far better man is George W. Bush. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Send Them A Message

The Weekly Standard makes it easy and cost-effective to reach key decision-makers in both parties.

During both the Democratic and Republican national conventions, we'll publish three special issues called The Daily Standard (as we've done before during these quadrennial affairs).

The Daily Standard will appear each day of the convention week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Copies will be delivered —more than 15,000 in all—to delegates' hotel rooms and the main convention areas. We'll also distribute them at the exclusive events and parties held throughout both conventions.

The Daily Standard will feature the same wit and insight as The Weekly Standard, the capitol's most influential journal of opinion. Which means it will be read and passed around—a lot. Which means it will be the perfect medium for advertisers wanting to ensure a wide distribution of their message to the assembled delegates and party leaders.

The Weekly Standard offers one package of 10 insertions, including:

- A page in both "Special Convention Preview" issues of *The Weekly Standard;*
- One page in each of the three issues of *The Daily Standard* to be distributed at the Democratic and Republican Conventions, for a total of 6 pages;
- A page in both "Special Post-Convention Review" issues; and

Your advertising dollar has never gone farther. For one price, you can reach politically informed and active convention-goers in both parties.

So influence the politically influential.
Advertise in *The Daily Standard.*

Space reservations deadline: July 14, 2004
Artwork deadline: July 21, 2004

For further information, please call Peter Dunn, Nick Swezey or Kelly Lindner, at (202) 293-4900.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Just God?

Pangle, political philosophy, and the Bible

By THOMAS F. POWERS

Tronosco's *Sacrifice of Isaac* (1759)

Archivo Iconographico / CORBIS

At the end of *Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham*, Thomas Pangle issues a challenge to modern readers, warning against the danger of "wallowing in longing for God instead of grappling with God." But when he suggests not only Jacob but also Socrates as models for this enterprise, the reader is perhaps rightly provoked to ask what political philosophy can contribute to understanding the Bible that faith does not already know.

One answer has to do with our historical situation. We live under the reign of secular enlightenment, and the seriousness of modern religious faith in the West seems to dissipate with every passing generation. Faith is typically treated as a matter of lifestyle or dismissed as fundamentalism. Toleration has become relativism, and religion is in danger of becoming a fixture in what Pangle calls our "cultural amusement park." Modern humanity seems less and less capable of taking the most important things seriously.

Pangle has written previous books on Montesquieu, Locke, the American founding, postmodernism, and the moral aspects of international relations. In all of these, Pangle pursues a course informed, above all, by the critical perspective of ancient philosophy opened up anew by his teacher Leo Strauss. Pangle is less interested in the historical and literary claims of higher criticism than in learning the truths the Bible has to teach. In addition to being a study of the first twenty-two chapters of Genesis,

Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham
by Thomas L. Pangle
Johns Hopkins University Press, 285 pp., $39.95

Pangle's book provides an enticing introduction to the richly provocative debate about fundamental questions of faith raised among the Bible's greatest students—Augustine and Aquinas, Ibn Ezra and Maimonides, al-Ghazali and Averroes, Luther and Calvin—and an array of writers from ancient and modern philosophical traditions as well.

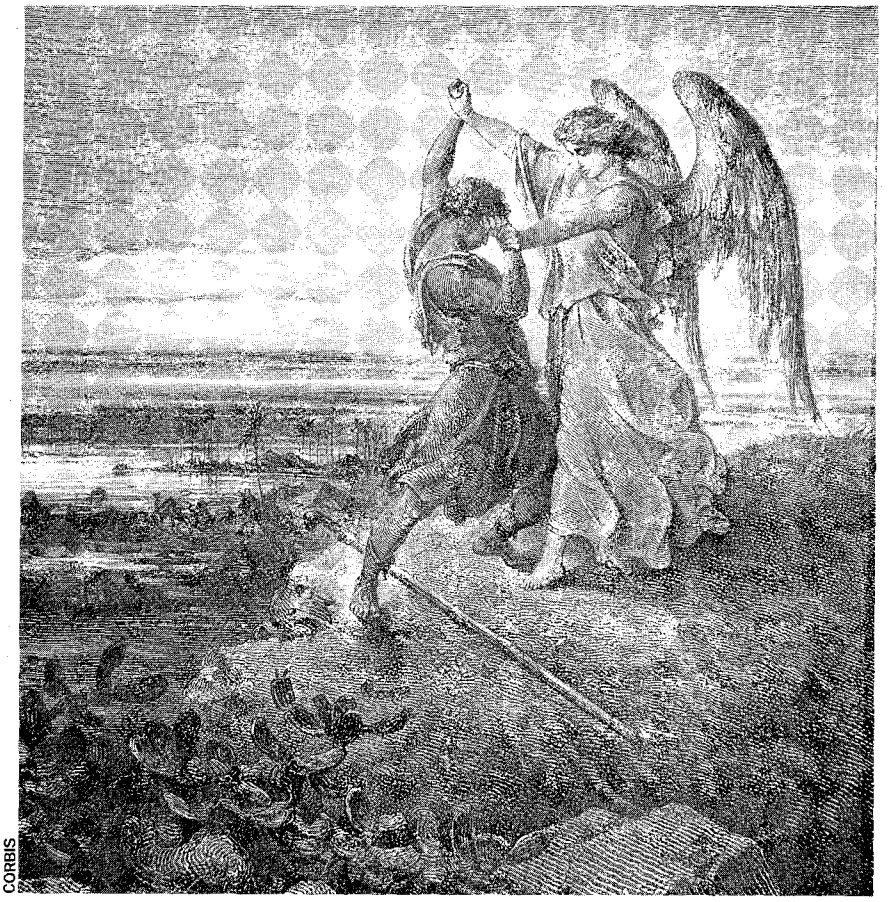
But Pangle's career as a political philosopher might seem to raise the question of his trustworthiness as a guide to the Bible. In a discussion of Kierkegaard's radical challenge to rationalism—in Kierkegaard's interpretation of Abraham as willing to sacrifice Isaac because "he believed by virtue of the absurd"—Pangle himself asks whether the appeal to sophisticated and doubting reason isn't at the opposite pole from the simplicity and purity of faith. Is not faith a mystery?

Of course, the tension between theology and philosophy has been exacerbated of late: A change in the self-understanding of philosophy in modern times has led to an exaggerated rupture between science and faith that has been detrimental for both.

Pangle's alternative response to the challenge of faith is thus not, to begin with, an attempt simply to explain away the experience of faith. He focuses where reason and revelation meet: on matters of justice and morality. The Bible does not leave human beings in

Thomas F. Powers teaches constitutional law at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



CORBIS

Jacob Wrestling with the Angel, *an 1866 engraving by Gustave Doré.*

the dark about these matters. As Pangle puts it, "Now, it is in regard to the right and the good—that is, in regard to justice or righteousness—that political philosophy and scriptural piety have the fullest basis for a conversation that may well be mutually illuminating. For righteousness, or justice in the fullest sense, is *the* theme of political philosophy, *the* cynosure of its meditations, even as righteousness (or justice in the full sense) is among the highest and most essential themes of Scripture."

To be sure, reflection on the Bible cannot be neutral or uncommitted, and Pangle seems to present his own meditation as the perspective of a "Socratic philosophy" that is "obliged to look upon its own religious experiences" in a philosophical way. But the spirit of Pangle's approach is far from the rationalism of, say, Hobbes or Spinoza, who sought mainly to transform and ultimately subvert the teaching of the Bible, making it more hospitable to their political project. At the same time, Pangle does not attempt to provide a Socratic or ancient rationalist interpretation of the Bible, an approach taken recently in Leon Kass's *The Beginning of Wisdom*.

Instead, Pangle brings into conflict the most powerful competing philosophical and theological interpretations of the Bible's moral vision, providing a truly philosophic introduction to centuries of debate. What is the ground of justice in God's eyes? What is the meaning of a perfect and omnipotent God's care for man? What is human sin, and why are human beings sinful? What is the meaning of the Fall? How do freedom, obedience, knowledge, and faith combine in piety? Pangle insists that justice is the core of what the biblical God wishes for man. Indeed, in his discussion of Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac, Pangle seems almost to suggest that God *is* the justice on which Abraham relied.

Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham seeks to illuminate and evoke above all the moral force of the foundational teachings of Genesis. The creation story shows the unfolding of an increase in freedom and thus the possibility of moral responsibility. The faith associated with the Fall is one that "guides us toward putting the concern for retributive justice in the foreground of our own existence." The virtue of Abraham is "that dignified humility that the Bible regards as the mean between the extremes of haughty arrogance (or *hubris*) and vileness or abasement." For Pangle, the moral foundation set down in Genesis frames all that follows because "the teaching of justice is the heart of Abraham's, and the chosen people's, mission."

No one who follows Pangle's investigation could fail to be moved by the weight and force of the deeply serious moral world of the Bible, a world we moderns can barely recollect or imagine. The book's emphasis on the Bible's moral core helps to explain the absence of any extended discussion of politics in a narrower sense (of Israel under the prophets and judges, and then under the reign of kings, for example). Similarly, Pangle passes over relatively quickly the cosmological and metaphysical issues raised in the creation story.

His discussion of the Fall is especially effective. Pangle begins by entertaining the possibility that the story suggests a kind of necessary education for human beings, an education out of their childlike simplicity. This interpretation seems initially attractive because in it humanity's departure from the garden amounts to a beneficial progress and maturation. Without knowledge of good and evil, human beings are innocent and sinless, but they also seem incapable of moral action. Viewing the Fall as education is the interpretation of Herder, for example, who sees in "the punishment of God (and how else can the all-Good punish?)" only "a new, merely more severe, blessing."

But Hobbes, who had already taken a similar line, makes clear its radical implication: If truly in need of education, Adam and Eve were not in fact responsible. The sin was not sin, and any punishment by God unjust. Hobbes concludes, outrageously but perhaps typically, that human mortality is not therefore a punishment but, somehow, a gift of God. But "from the very outset," Pangle writes, "Scripture is speaking to humans as to beings who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

see in their earthly mortality a horrible and unnecessary rupture of existence—and who thus hunger for subtle signs of hope that for the purified and godly, at any rate, the breach can somehow be healed." The pedagogical interpretation of the Fall fails to take seriously all that is at stake.

How then is the story of the Fall to be understood? A different perspective is St. Thomas Aquinas's insistence on the moral meaning of the Fall, emphasizing the weakness of man's reason, whether from some ignorance or from the influence of his "animal propensities." These failings, in turn, cannot be attributed to man's essential nature, since God's omnipotence and benevolence rule out this possibility. Adam and Eve must have been deserving, in some sense, of God's punishment. Other important questions continue this meditation on the story of man's fallen state. What was the sin of Adam and Eve, exactly? Did they understand good and evil before their temptation and, either way, how is their choice explicable and blameworthy? What is the meaning of obedience and what are the implications of obedience for human freedom and responsibility? How can God's omniscience and omnipotence be reconciled with man's failure?

Pangle does not attempt to judge all these questions in any final way. He does, however, reject both Pascal's view that the Fall be left an "unintelligible mystery" and Rousseau's pessimistic suggestion that the authority of Scripture itself must be questioned when it cannot be rendered simply reasonable. At most Pangle insists on one key premise, which cannot be abandoned without abandoning faith itself: We hold "a manifestly coherent or fundamentally unmysterious awareness of goodness and righteousness, as divine attributes, essential to our recognizing God as God, even in or at least behind His most perplexing demands and interventions."

It is this absolutely crucial assumption, an assumption that is itself a postulate of justice, that guides Pangle's account of the centrality of the question of justice in the Bible's presentation of Abraham. Abraham stands, of course, for unquestioning faith in God and God's commands, but Pangle claims that the heart of Abraham's faith is trust in God's *justice*. This helps explain Abraham's willingness to bargain with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah: Man is permitted, it seems, even to interrogate God if that interrogation presupposes and seeks to clarify God's justice.

Finally, orchestrating again a dialectical encounter between the text and its great commentators, Pangle approaches the question of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. If we begin by assuming the goodness and justice of God, how is this astounding command to be understood? Moreover, how is Abraham's faithful obedience itself to be understood? How can the faithful man devote himself to "a good that will accrue to him only if he does not aim at or devote himself to attaining that good"? How can devotion remain free from the taint of any but the highest motives? If piety is above all belief in and faithful adherence to God's justice, Pangle makes clear not only the seriousness but also the severity of piety.

Is it possible that we moderns can rise to the level of the seriousness of the Bible? We live in a world that teaches the importance of things only here on earth and, for the soul, the satisfaction of cruder, more readily met needs. Can the image of Abraham be anything more than a display at our cultural amusement park?

Thomas Pangle's *Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham* suggests we can. His grappling with the Bible is not simply identical with belief. But his effort is clearly undertaken in the spirit suggested by Pascal: "There are only two kinds of people that can be called reasonable: either those who serve God with all their heart because they have knowledge of him, or those who search for him with all their heart because they do not have knowledge of him." ♦

How He Made It

A Half Century of Norman Podhoretz.

BY MURRAY FRIEDMAN

In essays in the *American Historical Review* in 1992 and 1995, historians Michael Kazin and Alan Brinkley asked why so few of their colleagues have undertaken research on political conservatism. "Historians, like most people," Kazin ventured, "are reluctant to sympathize with people whose political opinions they detest." Overwhelmingly cosmopolitan in their cultural tastes and liberal or radical in their politics, scholars of modern American history have largely eschewed "research projects about past movements that seem to them either bastions of a crumbling status quo or the domain of puritan, pathological yahoos."

Since those articles were written, there has been a flood of books and articles on the subject—particularly on neoconservatism. Joining this celebration is Thomas L. Jeffers, a professor of literature at Marquette University who is writing a biography of Norman Podhoretz. By way of beginning his project, Jeffers has edited *The Norman Podhoretz Reader*, a collection of writings from the 1950s to the 1990s along with brief commentary on each decade's work.

The continually embattled Podhoretz has been an enduring figure over a period of fifty years. Even as a young critic in the 1950s, Podhoretz

Murray Friedman is director of the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University. His books The Neo Conservative Revolution *and* Commentary and American Life *are forthcoming this year.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proved remarkably prescient. In "The Know-Nothing Bohemians," for example, the twenty-eight-year-old Podhoretz skewered such contemporary icons as novelist Jack Kerouac and poet Allen Ginsberg—charging them with providing the model for destructive lifestyles and for creating a cult that emphasized a highly irresponsible individualism. America needs instead, Podhoretz suggested, such everyday middle-class values as self-restraint and individual responsibility, in particularly marrying and rearing a family. He described these virtues as the cement that held the society together and, not incidentally, the basis for orderly and progressive change. How far ahead of the pack he came to be seen only a few years later when a full-blown counterculture arose whose unhappy consequences are still with us today.

Podhoretz would continue to pound away at this theme when he became editor of *Commentary* in 1960, where he remained for thirty-five years. As he wrote in a postscript to his second volume of memoirs, *Breaking Ranks*: "The young were especially vulnerable [to the counter culture]. They had been inoculated against every one of the physical diseases which in times past had literally made it impossible for so many to reach adulthood. But against a spiritual plague like this one they were entirely helpless. Indeed, so spiritually illiterate had the culture become, that parents were unable even to recognize the disease when it struck their own children."

Throughout his career, Podhoretz has exhibited an almost reckless courage. The safest thing would have been to join what Harold Rosenberg once called "the herd of so-called independent minds." Instead, Podhoretz chose to take on the adversary culture, leaving in his wake a group of "ex-friends" (the title he gave another book of memoirs).

The reasons were the intensity of his feelings and honesty. This included exposing himself and his own failures in a series of self-portraits like, "My Negro Problem, and Ours" and his first memoir, *Making It* (excerpts from which Jeffers includes in *The Norman Podhoretz Reader*). What made him a pariah especially was his description of the "dirty little secret" that intellectuals and cultural leaders are as motivated as much by success and power as by the noble causes they more formally espouse.

Still, the lucidity and muscularity of his prose guaranteed him a band of devoted admirers. His writing abounds with lines like: "One of the longest journeys in the world is the journey from Brooklyn to Manhattan." If there

Free Press

The Norman Podhoretz Reader
A Selection of His Writings from the 1950s through the 1990s
edited by Thomas L. Jeffers
Free Press, 496 pp., $35

is a core principle that has driven him, it is his unalloyed love of his country, gratitude for the opportunities it made available to what Sam Lubell once called "children of the tenement trail." The magazine he edited could always be counted upon to discover what was right about America. Jeffers quotes from Podhoretz's "Valedictory" on stepping down as editor in 1995: "*Commentary* has defended America at a time when America has been under moral and ideological attack. *Commentary* has defended the Jewish people and the Jewish state when they, too, and for many of the same reasons, have been subjected to a relentless assault on their legitimacy and even their very existence. For me there has been no conflict or contradiction involved in defending this dual heritage by which I have been formed."

Podhoretz's finest moments came during the Vietnam meltdown, when many came to feel that confronting the Soviet Union's aggressive designs in the world would lead us into similar disasters. He had been an early opponent of the war—but he felt it to be a tragic mistake, not the moral iniquity that so many on the Left assumed it to be. Simultaneously, he was opposed to President Nixon's and Henry Kissinger's strategy of détente, which would permit that Communist power to remain in charge of territories it occupied in Eastern Europe and continue to threaten the undeveloped and free world.

Thus, at a time of grave danger and what Jimmy Carter called "malaise," Podhoretz went on the attack. In his books *Why We Were in Vietnam* and *The Present Danger*, along with his stable of writers at *Commentary*, Podhoretz poured forth article after article that became the underpinnings of the Reagan policy of bringing down the Soviet Union. (Following an article by Jeane Kirkpatrick in *Commentary*, Reagan named her the United States' ambassador to the United Nations.) Describing Podhoretz's critical role, historian Richard Gid Powers wrote, "During those bleakest days of anti-communism, there was, however, the first stirring of life, of rebirth, a sign of vigor at odds with the uncertainty and pessimism. . . . One man summoned the will, the strength, and the imagination to commence the giant task of rebuilding the anti Communist coalition. This was Norman Podhoretz."

Podhoretz continues to remain a figure of importance, as his 2002 book on the Bible, *The Prophets: Who They Were, What They Are*, showed, and will continue to pour out powerful work. But until Jeffers finishes his biography, *The Norman Podhoretz Reader* will serve as the best introduction to all that he has already accomplished. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Urban Legends

The decline and fall of the American city.

BY HARRY SIEGEL

Lyndon Johnson, the story goes, once delivered a speech in New York on the Great Society. Just as he declared America was engaged "in nothing less than an all-out war on poverty," a voice from the crowd replied, "Mr. President, we surrender."

More than forty years after the Great Society started in on its plan to abolish urban poverty—more than seventy years after the New Deal began to alter the relations between cities and the federal government—America's cities and their neighborhoods are only at the first steps of recovery. And the wounds are still raw.

City
Urbanism and Its End
by Douglas Rae
Yale University Press, 516 pp., $30

The Slaughter of Cities
Urban Renewal as Ethnic Cleansing
by E. Michael Jones
St. Augustine's, 668 pp., $40

Two new books offer starkly different but in some ways complementary chronicles of this long period of urban decline. In *City: Urbanism and Its End*, Douglas Rae, a Yale University political science professor who served in the early 1990s as New Haven's chief administrative officer, places the brunt of the blame for his city's fall—from a working-class manufacturing center to a cluster of dilapidated housing projects—on technological, demographic, and economic changes that diminished the need for and utility of cities. Federal planning, he argues, accelerated and exacerbated the decline of cities, but hardly caused it.

In *The Slaughter of Cities*, E. Michael Jones argues that a WASP elite that ran the federal government used southern blacks as its unwitting pawns in a vast "psychological warfare campaign" against unassimilated white ethnics, particularly urban Catholics and their parishes. It is a paranoid and disturbing perspective, but one that occasionally gains him intriguing insights into the effect of the planning elite and their patrons in Washington imposed on urban neighborhoods.

The story the two books tell is the destruction of the white ethnic working class urban neighborhood and the effect this has had on urban life. Both Jones and Rae place much of the blame for the creation of the modern ghetto on federally coordinated social engineering. And both shortchange the urban revival of the 1990s, which cuts against their claims.

Rae's *City* chronicles the rise and fall of New Haven, and his account hinges on the mayoralty of Dick Lee, a Catholic politician who straddled the gap between Boston's legendary Irish mayor Michael Curley and Gotham's WASP reformer John Lindsay. Lee mastered ethnic and ward politics—stopping his Cadillac to give children a ride to school, attending two or three wakes on his way home from work—even as he oversaw the flagship city of the Great Society's "Model Cities" program. New Haven received far more federal dollars per capita than any other city. But even with a blank federal check at his disposal and a team of the nation's best and brightest to oversee his plans, Lee in his last years in office lamented, "If New Haven is a model city, God help America's cities."

In an earlier era, New Haven had prospered while expecting little from its elected officials. The city boomed between 1840 and 1920, as manufacturing industries gathered in cities to take advantage of proximity to rail lines, a ready force of cheap labor, and a supply of steam power. Local government's role in New Haven was mostly limited to policing and the maintenance of streets and sewers. Planning was, for the most part, outside the scope of local government, instead contingent on where factories, businesses, and their workers chose to locate. In 1910, Cass Gilbert and Frederick Law Olmsted issued an ambitious plan for New Haven's future, complete with new avenues, parks, and rail facilities as part of a comprehensive reenvisioning of the city. Mayor Frank Rice showed both his contempt for the plan and his quotidian vision of the office's responsibilities that year when he proudly declared, "The best work of this administration . . . has been in the improvement of the city sidewalks."

And with such hands-off government as the norm, New Haven's population increased more than five-fold between 1850 and 1920. But this swell began to ebb in the 1920s. As the automobile and the AC power grid dispersed industry, the upwardly mobile began to head for the suburbs, and immigration restrictions disrupted the flow of new urban arrivals.

These trends all augured ill for the future of urbanism, but the federal government's expansion into local affairs beginning under President Roosevelt vastly exacerbated the trend, as urban politics became hopelessly intertwined with social engineering. The landslide began in 1933 with the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, which refinanced homes with government loans as part of the government's response to widespread mortgage defaults in the previous year. The program quickly expanded and began conducting regional studies of housing markets that seventy years later continue to define the urban neighborhoods surveyed. These studies preferred WASPs over Catholics, Jews, or blacks. They liked new rather than old construction, incomplete development over finished neighborhoods, and single-purpose residential areas over mixed use—policies that guaranteed cities would receive lower ratings than suburbs. Bankers were reluctant to invest in areas that received lower

Harry Siegel, editor of NewPartisan.com, *is writing a book on gentrification in New York.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pictures: Yale University Press

New Haven in 1895

grades from HOLC and charged higher interest for loans within them, ensuring that the difference between A grade and D grade neighborhoods would only widen over time.

The Housing Act of 1937 made public housing a national policy, and by the early 1940s this meant the construction of huge new low-income housing projects, which were quickly diverted into use for war workers, many of them poor blacks newly arrived from the South to fill suddenly available manufacturing jobs. Federal ambitions only became more utopian after the war. The Housing Act of 1949 actually calls for "the elimination of substandard and otherwise inadequate housing through clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as is feasible of the goal of a decent home and living environment for every American family."

Rae rightly observes: "Renewal also invited extravagant environmental determinism," which imagined "bad neighborhoods that were given good built environments would function like good neighborhoods." It also meant the concentration and segregation of the urban poor in enclosed "projects" (the word itself announces the social engineering intentions of its adherents) cut off from the businesses and street life central to the Jane Jacobs vision of city life that Rae endorses.

These designations of blighted areas proved self-fulfilling. New Haven's urban renewal program of the 1950s follows the HOLC map almost exactly. To gain federal funds with which to "renew" these areas necessitated "the certification of a slum—one more signal that unsubsidized investment was risky, and that all roads to personal security ran away from such places."

Dick Lee took office in 1954 after defeating another sidewalk maintenance-type mayor, William Celentano, who dismissed Lee's ambitious redevelopment plans as "unrealistic," light years beyond the orbit of local government. Though Lee remained in office until 1970, serving eight terms and delivering his promised federally funded renewal, Celentano had the last laugh, as Lee left the city worse off than he'd inherited it. Lee remade the city by leaving core services and patronage in the hands of the Democratic party machine, while simultaneously creating a shadow government of Ivy League planning elites—known locally as the Kremlin—to mastermind New Haven's demolition and reconstruction.

Lee's mere promise of a "slumless city" was embraced as "the greatest success story in the history of the world" by Johnson's labor secretary Willard Wirtz. That's true if success is measured in the number of people displaced. Those who could afford it fled in droves, as more than a quarter of the city's white population left during Lee's sixteen years in office. In one particularly disruptive move that mirrored the changes being made across the city, Lee cleared out a white ethnic neighborhood of working-class homeowners on Oak Street (Rae estimates that more than a fifth of New Haven's population was involuntarily dislocated by Lee's various renewal projects) and replaced it with a housing project. To this day, the displaced Oak Street alumni hold an annual celebration of the neighborhood that was. A massive concrete mall downtown fared little better than the projects—where once small businesses created street life and a sense of place, now this megablock dwarfs its neighbors, while doing much less business than hoped.

These rigidly large and modern monuments of decline proved impenetrable to those without, inescapable to those within, and impervious to changes in the life of the surrounding city. The scale of Lee's renovations locked the city into decline. Other municipalities had neighborhoods and housing waiting to be rediscovered in the urban revival of the 1990s. New Haven has massive concrete blocks whose monolithic form dictated their equally monolithic function, the seventh highest poverty rate of any city, and a serious crime problem, all of this exacerbated by "a large cadre of professional service providers, many living in the suburbs [who] had become de facto spokespersons for the concentration of clinical facilities in the city."

Having chronicled Lee's sterilization of New Haven, Rae lets the mayor off the hook. Ignoring the urban revival of the 1990s accomplished under mayors like New York's Rudolph Giuliani, Rae argues that Lee failed because "he had set himself against history." But for all of Lee's brilliance and success in reshaping the city, New Haven would have been better off under a mayor who just maintained the sidewalks.

Where Douglas Rae presents in *City* the end of urbanism as a natural phenomenon—that even a mayor as ambitious and intelligent as Lee could do nothing to arrest, E. Michael Jones in *The Slaughter of Cities* argues that the old urban compact was sustainable and was undone only by the concerted efforts of a powerful WASP elite congenitally hostile to Catholicism. "The purpose of renewal," he claims, "was not construction but destruction, . . . ethnic cleansing based on the prejudices of the local elite."

The New Deal's housing policies were social engineering on a vast scale, but it took the Great Society to add race to the mix. Beginning with the industrial boom caused by the gear-up for World War II, roughly 150,000 southern blacks migrated northward annually

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

straight through the mid-1970s. And these blacks began arriving just as the jobs they'd come to fill were leaving for greener suburban pastures.

Thanks to real-estate discrimination and government incentives, these blacks tended to end up in white ethnic inner city, often Catholic, factory neighborhoods, where their arrival triggered sell-offs by homeowners motivated by fear of crime, diminishing property values, and racial animus. The three were often conflated: "No matter how it seemed in the moment of confrontation when a black family moved into a white neighborhood," Jones writes, "this was never a simple black-and-white struggle. It was a three-way battle in which the WASP ruling class made use of the black underclass to bring about the destruction of neighborhoods where the ethnic working class lived."

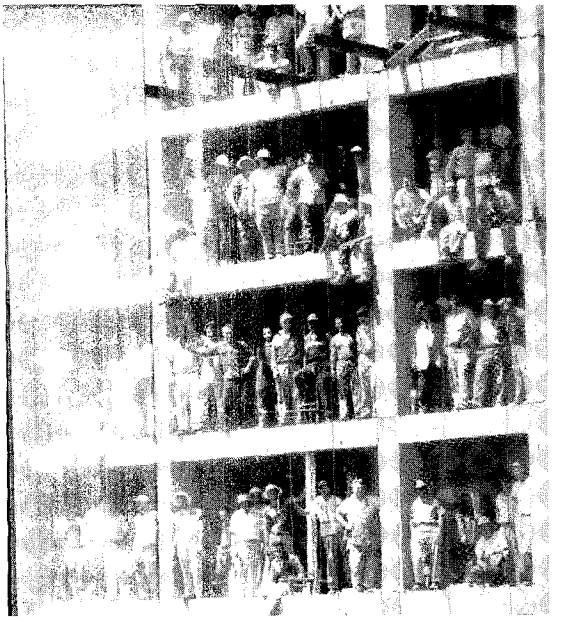
The geographic and ethnic nature of the parish (and the ward, its political parallel) made Catholics the group most resistant to leaving their neighborhoods. As Gerald Gamm put it in his 1999 book *Urban Exodus*, "Catholics live in another world. For them, it is the parish that names the neighborhood, and the church that names the street." But the razing of neighborhoods through eminent domain to construct housing projects and the threat of plummeting property values impelled even Catholics to flee the tightly knit neighborhoods they had maintained. Jones presents all this as a conspiracy. (I reached twenty-five before I stopped counting references in *The Slaughter of Cities* to the University of Chicago as a base of psychological warfare.)

In the meantime, Catholics are merely innocent in this account. Jones's claim that "The defensive measures which the ethnics took against black migration were known as riots" is fantastically facile. Martin Luther King Jr.'s strategy of nonviolence was, Jones tells us, "a form of extortion." After sneeringly describing King's efforts to integrate Detroit's housing market, Jones informs us that "no one has the right to own a house in a particular neighborhood." When Martin Luther King Jr. and his supporters were attacked in Cicero, just outside of Chicago, while protesting the community's housing discrimination, their cars burned behind them to cut off any escape, Jones's sympathy is with the arsonists and bottle-throwers. He treats Catholics like Dick Lee as assimilationist traitors.

This nastiness is unfortunate, because Jones is onto something significant. The destruction of the working class, homeowning urban neighborhoods was not, as Rae argues, just the necessary outcome of economic and demographic changes, but also the result of ill-considered government policies written by urban planners often contemptuous of Catholics and patronizing toward blacks. Jones vastly overstates the case: "the social compact involving the ethnic neighborhood lasted for roughly 100 years . . . [and] could have lasted longer, if the ruling class hadn't grown impatient with it and tried to replace it. Race was the excuse for replacing it." But even all the problems with Jones's sprawling, uneven, and often offensive book don't entirely wreck his thesis. The ethnic neighborhood genuinely did contribute stability to America's cities, and there really was something in the American elite in those days that wanted ethnic neighborhoods eliminated.

In pushing for the Great Society, President Johnson predicted that, "In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double." But the urban population has remained flat since his prediction, and the cities were rebuilt only at the cost of demolishing stable neighborhoods and replacing them with government projects, driving white ethnics and middle-class blacks into the suburbs as cities became synonymous with stagnancy, crime, and decay. While decline was to some extent inevitable—Henry Ford once remarked, "We shall solve the city problem by leaving the city"—the ghettoization of the inner city and the cycle of multigenerational poverty and dysfunction were caused in significant measure by government intervention.

In formulating policy at the federal level, and creating tremendous financial incentives for local adherence to them,



Haven begins its urban undoing.

Washington put an end to much of what Rae calls cities' "useful inefficiencies" that are so central to urbanism. It was urban policies respectful of the idea of local public spaces that allowed for the revival of the 1990s. New York didn't have to create new neighborhoods—Harlem, Williamsburg, and a host of other areas have housing that drew new residents as soon as they felt the streets were safe to walk at night. New Haven, on the other hand, had torn its old neighborhoods down to make projects that didn't allow for alternate uses or new populations.

What E. Michael Jones in *The Slaughter of Cities* understands, though he vastly overstates it, is that the same stubbornness that kept the Catholics in cities—and made them so belligerent to blacks who threatened the stability of their neighborhoods—was key to rebuilding the cities. But now that systematic and legally accepted segregation and discrimination are no longer acceptable practices, we can again recognize the primacy of the neighborhood.

Douglas Rae's grand utopian vision in *City: Urbanism and Its End* of the city as a monolithic social (and housing) project proved far less successful than Giuliani's relatively prosaic goal of safe and civil streets, which allowed new residents to move into and revive long dilapidated neighborhoods. In that sense, what American cities need are good street-sweeping mayors. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Brief

***Digressions on Some Poems by Frank O'Hara: A Memoir* by Joe Le Sueur (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 305 pp., $25).** Beauty has rarely revenged itself on wit with such thoroughness as it does in this book. Le Sueur's memoir would make a biopic to stand beside *Citizen Kane* or *Mommie Dearest*. Frank O'Hara was one of the secret masters of midcentury America. He set the pace and the fashion, knew everyone, died young, and had the great good fortune to have been beloved by a man destined to be the Boswell of artists for his age. Every Boswell needs a Johnson, someone worthy to be studied like the Torah for his every interpretable utterance. O'Hara qualified. He had a knack for accurate snap judgments, a papal sense of his own inerrancy, a personal magnetism, and, at his core, a chip of unmeltable ice that destined his every love affair to end in heartbreak—for those who loved him.

Le Sueur was the ideal worshiper and victim, a man who could survive O'Hara's egoism and the snubs of legions of O'Hara's famous and envious friends (just about *tout le beau monde* of New York between 1949 and 1962). The secret of Le Sueur's survival—he could never have been said to be successful—was his preternatural blond good looks. The book contains enough photos to make it clear that in the gay subculture of that (or any) era it would always have been O'Hara who was the gnome. The disparity must have been a gaff in his flesh.

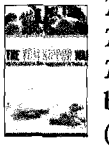
—Thomas M. Disch

***Educating for Liberty: The First Half-Century of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute* by Lee Edwards (Regnery, 343 pp., $27.95).** When he first put the idea onto paper, the founder of the "Intercollegiate Society of Individualists," Frank Chodorov, predicted it might take fifty years to buttress principles such as respect for private property so they would not be trampled by collectivist sentiment on college campuses. In time for the fiftieth birthday of ISI—now the Intercollegiate Studies Institute—Lee Edwards examines the society's history of "educating for liberty."

The organization that began as a take-back-the-universities offshoot of the journal *Human Events* is now a multimillion-dollar enterprise with its own book imprint. ISI has always been an outside-the-Beltway observer of politics. "It is the duty of ISI," Edwards writes, "to remind conservatives that in politics there are no permanent victories or defeats, only permanent things like wisdom, courage, prudence, and justice." Edwards gives special consideration to those who weathered the cash-strapped early years. *Educating for Liberty* has a few editing slipups and factual errors, but they are basically insignificant to this fascinating history.

ISI still mails literature to teachers and students, as it did in the 1950s, but nowadays it also provides financial help to professors and internships for freedom-friendly journalists, and it publishes a well-regarded college guide. This "educational pillar," Edwards writes, "promotes in a hundred different ways on a thousand different campuses its unwavering belief in ordered liberty and a humane economy."

—Beth Henary



***The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter that Transformed the Middle East* by Abraham Rabinovich (Schocken, 543 pp., $27.50).** Israel's dramatic victory in the Six Day War of 1967 still looms large in the minds of many Americans. Abraham Rabinovich's *The Yom Kippur War* reminds us how close Israel came to an equally dramatic defeat in 1973. Rabinovich, a veteran of the U.S. Army and author of five previous books on military history, writes a compelling narrative and provides his readers with colorful accounts of such figures as Anwar Sadat, Ariel Sharon, Moshe Dayan, and Golda Meir.

Rabinovich has made a tremendous effort to understand the Sadat regime. Unfortunately, he is unable to offer similar insights into the Assad regime, having been stymied both by the continued isolation of the Baathist state and the closed nature of Syrian society. Particularly notable is Rabinovich's examination of the role played by the superpowers in the conflict, each providing materiel and intelligence as well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the diplomatic framework for the cease-fire. Rabinovich pays particular attention to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, whose negotiations with Moscow, and shuttle-diplomacy between Cairo, Damascus, and Tel Aviv, represented the pinnacle of his career.

Though Rabinovich is successful in showing the high commands, he often fails to illuminate the situation on the ground. The book lacks sufficient maps to allow the reader to place the action. Still, those with a desire to understand the enduring conflict in the Middle East will be well served by Rabinovich's gripping account.

—Michael Goldfarb

The Working Poor: Invisible in America **by David K. Shipler (Knopf, 319 pp., $25).** The poor are different from you and me—so a legion of journalists has descended upon this alien species to report the "exhausting struggles" of Americans who fix cars and wait tables. The genre includes *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich, *Random Family* by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, and *Growing Up Fast* by Joanna Lipper.

Now David Shipler adds *The Working Poor*. He roamed the country to relate the stories of people who work to survive and succeed. His subjects include a former drug addict near Washington, an immigrant waitress in California, farm workers in North Carolina, and a cancer-stricken mother in New Hampshire.

Unfortunately, Shipler's research doesn't support his assertion that the American "ethic of egalitarianism . . . touts the ideal of equal opportunity without actually providing it." Shipler's working-poor subjects *do* have opportunities to change and to grow, and many are happy to seize them. He includes a portrait of a sometimes-homeless single mother who shepherds her son to a financial-aid package at Dartmouth College. Shipler's other families have success stories to tell: A recovering addict bubbles over with pride at her job at Xerox. An immigrant escapes a "re-education camp" in Vietnam to send his children to American colleges.

When the poor fail, Shipler makes excuses. Sarah and Willie, for example, spend their earned-income tax credit on tattoos while their three kids subsist on junk food in a borrowed house with broken windows. But, he notes, "even if Sarah and Willie had been models of frugality, their lives would still have been shackled to a heavy history of debt." Shipler concludes that it is "time to be ashamed." But strip away the lamentations, and the author has shown readers a generous, if imperfect, America in which hardworking, if imperfect, poor people can inch their way past minimum wage.

—Nicole Gelinas

Profiles, Probabilities, and Stereotypes **by Frederick Schauer (Belknap, 359 pp., $29.95).** Conventional wisdom mandates that law enforcement agencies tailor justice to individual cases. Frederick Schauer rejects this apparently simple piece of wisdom and forwards a provocative argument for generalization in law and daily life. While the book's cover shows a police officer searching a swarthy man, Schauer considers the hot-button issue of profiling only one component of a much larger effort to defend the practice of making generalizations.

The book centers on what Schauer calls "statistically sound non-universal generalizations." Such generalizations include statements like, "Pit bulls are dangerous," "Driving drunk causes fatal accidents," "Arab males commit many terrorist acts," and "African-Americans commit a disproportionate share of crime." While hardly anyone disputes their accuracy, taking them to their logical conclusions could result in unfair hassle and damage for members of groups in question.

But making generalizations, Schauer finds, plays a role in the justice system. Nearly all crimes that fall into the category of *malum prohibitum*—bad because they either carry a strong odor of even worse criminality (money laundering) or often lead to more serious offenses (drunk driving)—were outlawed because of a generalization or profile.

Not all insider traders seek to undermine confidence in the market, not all drunk drivers cause accidents, and not all civilians bringing guns onto airplanes want to commit a terrorist act. Profiling, Schauer finds, proves so central to the rule of law that it can't be intrinsically unjust. Indeed, "total avoidance of generalization [is] impossible, but even the comparative avoidance of generalization is often unwise."

Schauer concedes that the existence of a strong factual basis for generalization doesn't mandate that we act on it. Sometimes, values such as equality may legitimately trump the efficiency of making a fine generalization: Perhaps the need to avoid any government-sponsored racial classifications overrides the improvements to public safety gained when police single out African-American men for searches. Certain accurate generalizations, likewise, perpetuate themselves to the disadvantage of a certain group and thus prove unjust. Before the 1970s, for example, many states prohibited women from administering estates—on the correct grounds that females lacked experience in law and business. Of course, the existence of laws like this insured that most women never gained such experience.

Schauer's book has a few flaws: It is a bit repetitive, and it qualifies its conclusions too much. But these don't detract from the book as a whole. Rather than indulge recriminations about racism or simple-minded nostrums about public safety, Schauer has shown that a society ruled by laws needs to make generalizations and, yes, create profiles.

—Eli Lehrer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Not a Parody

Reproduced below is the "exam" given by the University of Georgia's former assistant men's basketball coach Jim Harrick Jr. to his "Coaching Principles" class in 2001. The NCAA is investigating whether players—three of whom got A's in the course—received improper academic assistance from Harrick.

PEDS 3912 Final Exam

Name: _____

1. How many goals are on a basketball court?
   a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

2. How many players are allowed to play at one time on any one team in a regulation game?
   a. 2 b. 3 c. 4 d. 5

3. In what league do the Georgia Bulldogs compete?
   a. ACC b. Big Ten c. SEC d. Pac 10

4. What is the name of the coliseum where the Georgia Bulldogs play?
   a. Cameron Indoor Arena
   b. Stegeman Coliseum
   c. Carrier Dome
   d. Pauley Pavilion

5. How many halves are in a college basketball game?
   a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

6. How many quarters are in a high school basketball game?
   a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

7. How many points does one field goal account for in a Basketball Game?
   a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

8. How many points does a 3-point field goal account for in a Basketball Game?
   a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

9. How many officials referee a college basketball game?
   a. 2 b. 4 c. 6 d. 3

10. How many teams are in the NCAA Men's Basketball National Championship Tournament?
    a. 48 b. 64 c. 65 d. 32

11. What is the name of the exam which all high school seniors in the State of Georgia must pass?
    a. Eye Exam
    b. How Do The Grits Taste Exam
    c. Bug Control Exam
    d. Georgia Exit Exam

12. What basic color are the uniforms the Georgia Bulldogs wear in home games?
    a. White b. Red c. Black d. Silver

13. What basic color are the uniforms the Georgia Bulldogs wear in away games?
    a. Pink b. Blue c. Orange d. Red

14. How many minutes are played in a college basketball contest?
    a. 20 b. 40 c. 60 d. 90

15. How many minutes are played in a high school basketball game?
    a. 15 b. 30 c. 32 d. 45

16. Diagram the 3-point line.

17. Diagram the half-court line.

18. How many fouls is a player allowed to have in one Basketball game before fouling out in that game?
    a. 3 b. 5 c. 7 d. 0

19. If you go on to become a huge coaching success, to whom will you tribute the credit?
    a. Mike Krzyzewski b. Bobby Knight
    c. John Wooden d. Jim Harrick, Jr.

20. In your opinion, who is the best Division I Assistant Coach in the country?
    a. Ron Jursa b. John Pelphrey
    c. Jim Harrick, Jr. d. Steve Wojciechowski

Have a Great Christmas Break!!!

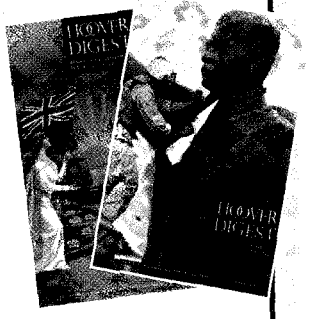
Courtesy University of Georgia

the weekly Standard
March 15, 2004

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When Jobs Are Ille[illegible] Will Have Jobs

HOOVER DIGEST
RESEARCH AND OPINION ON PUBLIC POLICY



SUBSCRIBE
Receive four quarterly issues at the introductory rate of $20.

FREE ISSUE
Receive a complimentary issue of the latest Digest without obligation.

Call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverdigest.org

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

My hero [illegible] but not [illegible] President Bush's immigration plan overlooks the fact that some of our illegal immigration problem arises from government regulations mandating unsustainable wages and benefits.

It sounds good to require employers to pay a "living wage" and provide health, parental leave, and many other benefits. But some workers are not economically productive enough to make those high-minded requirements cost-effective for the employer. **Mandated benefits make the young, the low-skilled, and the poorly educated legally unemployable.** Their jobs have been made illegal.

Since it is easier to recognize a problem when someone else is guilty, let's look at Europe. Most European countries have generous social safety nets partially provided by employers. Benefits such as six weeks of paid vacation, short workweeks, health care, and maternal leave all increase the costs of employing workers.

The result is that some people have fabulous jobs, and others have nothing. Workers whose productivity does not justify these compensation levels are out of luck. Unemployment in European countries has stabilized at 8 percent—a scandal by American standards. European youth (too young to have acquired skills commensurate with these compensation levels) spend years in universities, in socially enforced idleness, waiting to be allowed to do something genuinely useful.

In the meantime, there are still jobs for which no one is willing to pay the legally required compensation package. All over Europe, immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East do those jobs. These Muslim immigrants, barred from the higher-class jobs, are angry about their exclusion.

Of course, no one admits to planning this outcome. But that outcome is the inevitable consequence of years of legislation. European progressives have done a fine job of voting for bigger compensation packages. They break their arms patting themselves on the back for their compassion. But they conveniently overlook the fact that these compensation packages were purchased by cutting off the lower rungs of the job ladder. People who would have acquired valuable job skills and work habits no longer have the opportunity to do so.

Similarly, American teenagers hang out at the mall, while Mexican immigrants cut the grass and do the babysitting in the teenagers' middle-class neighborhoods. Suburban families prefer to pay those who work on a regular basis and who are often illegal; such work, which used to be a rite of passage for the young, has been made illegal by the imposition of mandated wages and benefits. How many American teenagers realistically need their own health benefits or paid parental leave?

In the 2003 legislative session alone, California passed eleven bills that the Chamber of Commerce considered "job killers," including increased health care requirements and increased costs of frivolous employee lawsuits. All this is in addition to California's expensive paid family-leave plan and inflexible wage and hour restrictions. Like their European counterparts, **California progressives expect employers to solve all the problems of the world, including childcare and health care.**

Immigration policy is a mess, no mistake. But until we address the problem of government's mandating unsustainable compensation levels, we will continue to have immigration problems. When we make jobs illegal, we ensure that only illegals will have those jobs.

—Jennifer Roback Morse

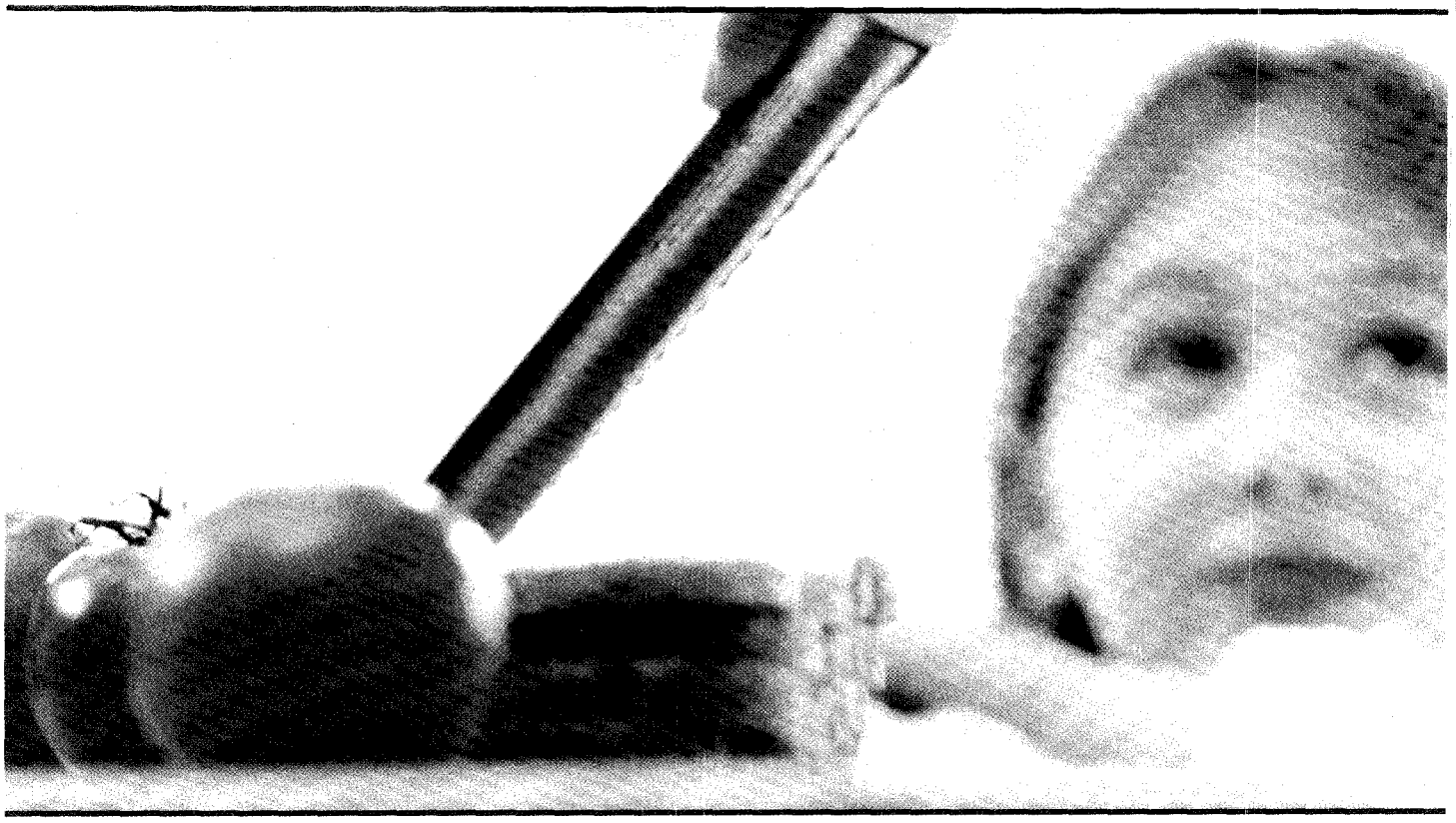
Jennifer Roback Morse is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



From IPOs to BLTs

Acronyms. People love them. But there's one that makes a big difference every day all across the USA—MBA, the Mortgage Bankers Association.

Because our members finance all types of real estate transactions, from homes to shopping malls to movie theaters, neighborhoods can become the kinds of places their residents want them to be: places where what's for lunch really is important.

MORTGAGE BANKERS ASSOCIATION
Investing in communities

www.mortgagebankers.org
(800) 793-6222

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED